

AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH: KOREAN MINISTRY
AT THE FERN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

A Professional Project
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The Faculty of
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

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ABSTRACT

While The United Methodist Church as a denomination searches for a more comprehensive understanding of the diversified and pluralistic church life, this study attempts to develop a model of a racially inclusive church at the Fern Hill United Methodist Church in which a Caucasian congregation and a Korean congregation share their mutual ministry under the leadership of a Korean-American pastor.

A sociological study on the destiny of the ethnic immigrants laid a foundation for understanding of the marginal characteristics of the immigrants and their new identity - hyphenated - relating both to their adopted country and their own ethnic origin.

Biblical and theological inquiries provided a basis for the immigrants call to be the divine agents in the land of their immigration: liberated and liberating agents in the process of establishing a new identity; creative minority identifying their own welfare with that of the society; and promoters of the justice of God in the society ruled by the white majority.

Both positive and negative factors which contribute to the process of establishing a new identity in Korean immigrant churches were identified. Religious and social services are paralleled as two main functions in Korean immigrant churches. But a direct transplant of the Korean church into the soil of the United States provides a religious

ghetto which slows the process of transformation of the immigrants into a new identity as Korean-American.

A model of a racially inclusive church was developed on the assumption that a mutual ministry could be possible through mutual understanding, mutual appreciation and respect, mutual trust in one another and also in God's plan, and mutual interactivity.

The overall results of this project pose mutual responsibilities to the Caucasian congregation and Korean immigrants in the church: the Korean immigrants as a creative force in dislocation that leads to the fulfilment of the justice of God; the Caucasian congregation to identify with suffering members of the society with whom the Christ fully identified himself. The goal of the mutual ministry is to build "a new city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

THE MISSIONAL PRIORITY OF
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

In 1976, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted the Ethnic Minority Local Church as a Missional Priority of the denomination. Then, "Developing and Strengthening the Ethnic Minority Local Church" is designated by the denomination as the single Missional Priority for the 1981-1984 quadrennium. By "developing" it means starting new ethnic local churches; by "strengthening" it means enabling new and existing ethnic churches to fulfil their ministries.

The 1980 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church defines a Missional Priority as:

a response to a critical need in God's work which calls for The United Methodist Church's massive and sustained effort through primary attention and ordering or reordering of program and budget at every level of the Church, as adopted by the General Conference.....¹

This definition calls for reordering of the existing programs and priorities to develop and strengthen the special ministry for the ethnic minorities at every level of the Church.

¹Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church
(Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1980),
par. 803.8, p. 366.

The rationale behind this top Missional Priority is that now is a time for all United Methodists to recognize the presence of the Ethnic Minorities within the denomination and its communities, to appreciate their cultural contributions to the whole church, and to make the denomination an inclusive church with the diversity of racial groups and their cultures.

This abrupt change of direction from the integration effort to inclusiveness is the result of the awareness of the reality. In the past, ethnic minority churches in the United States have not been accepted as a full part of the United Methodist Church. "The distinctive ethnic organizations were seen by the church as embarrassments, and they were abolished in the name of the unity of the church."² The general policy of The United Methodist Church on ethnic groups within the denomination has been "integration" just as the melting pot theory has been a prevalent philosophy when society deals with ethnic and racial issues. But "integration" in the church too often meant:

We will accept you on "our" terms. You are welcome to come to our churches, but do not expect us to adopt your ways or adapt to your style. We will accept your color, but not your culture, heritage or traditions.³

²Developing and Strengthening The Ethnic Minority Local Church, Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Ethnic Minority Local Church Missional Priority, (Evanston: United Methodist Communications, 1981) p.6.

³Raymond R. Lamb, "EMLC = Extra Tender Loving Concern," Interpreter, 27 (January 1983) 7.

Getting together on such conditions is racism in the church. Without recognition and appreciation of the inherited culture and values of the ethnic minorities, there could be no true "coming together," because "oneness" in Christ does not mean "sameness."

The Ethnic Minority Local Church Missional Priority is a response and effort by The United Methodist Church to become an inclusive church, to benefit from the rich heritage of culture, lifestyle and theological insight of the ethnic minority groups, and finally to mobilize them into new agents of God for his plan of salvation for the whole of humanity.

Therefore, the writer firmly believes that the highest objective of the Ethnic Minority Local Church Missional Priority should be a "mutuality for mission" rather than reducing the ethnic minorities to "objects of mission."⁴

In order to prepare the United Methodists for this great missional challenge, the whole church has to study and understand the destiny of the ethnic minority people as marginal persons and their call to be the divine agents in the strange land. With this understanding, there should be also actual interactivities between the white majority and the ethnic minorities for the mutual ministry even at the local church level, because the root of racism is in the local churches. The local churches should serve as the

⁴Developing and Strengthening The Ethnic Minority.

agents for reconciliation and mutual ministry in their communities. This missional mandate for the local churches is stated in the 1980 Book of Discipline:

It is primarily at the level of the local church that the Church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. It is the function of the local church to minister to the needs of persons in the communities, where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all age groups, cultural groups, racial groups, ethnic groups, and groups with handicapping conditions as minimal expectations of an authentic church.⁵

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

There can be several church settings in which the mutual ministry across racial and ethnic lines can be carried out: The racial and ethnic minority local church, the racially mixed congregation and the white local church.

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church, predominately white, is engaged in the mutual ministry with a Korean group. The cross-cultural appointment of the writer to this church as pastor has brought a big challenge as well as some uncertainties into the ministry of the church. It is a big challenge for the pastor and the white congregation because the church is facing an enormous opportunity of outreach evangelism for Korean immigrants in the community. Experiencing a failure in the effort to establish an integrated congregation with

⁵Book of Discipline, par. 202, p. 109.

the white and Korean immigrants, this church is pursuing an inclusive church with two language services - one in English and the other in Korean.

There are some uncertainties in terms of the future direction of this mutual ministry. How can the two groups grow together, finding ways to help and enrich each other, in the same church? How to promote the understanding and appreciation of the differences of individuals and their cultural inheritance? How can it be one church, allowing self-determination of the Korean group? What about the pastoral leadership and the structure of the Korean group?

But, it is the conviction of the writer, and also the purpose of this project, that the mutual ministry at the Fern Hill United Methodist Church will enable the church to become an inclusive and authentic agent of God's plan of salvation. This professional project is grounded in the conviction, as Bishop Melvin G. Talbert expressed it, that:

God is sovereign ruler of all existence and being; that Jesus Christ is the unique expression of God's love, care and concern for human destiny; that the Holy Spirit is God's continuous presence with human beings, enabling them to respond with faith, hope, love and compassion; that the church, the body of Christ, is the community of faith through which Christians witness and serve and constantly show the world God's plan of salvation; that human beings of all ethnic, cultural, racial and social backgrounds are of equal value and worth; and that all human beings are guilty of sin and are in constant need of being challenged to "act justly, to love loyalty, to walk wisely before your God."⁶

⁶Melvin G. Talbert, "Preface" in Developing and Strengthening The Ethnic Minority, p. 3.

Chapter II

SOCIOLOGY OF IMMIGRANTS

THEORY OF MARGINALITY

One of the sociological propositions describing the situation of the immigrants is the concept of marginality. Robert E. Park, who extensively studied human migrations and their consequences in terms of social process, first used the marginal man. He wrote:

The marginal man is one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures. Thus, the individual whose mother is a Jew and whose father is a Gentile is fatally condemned to grow up under the influence of two traditions. In that case, his mind is the crucial in which two different and refractory cultures may be said to melt and, either wholly or in part, fuse.¹

Everett Stonequist, Park's student, defines the marginal person:

The individual who through migration, education, marriage, or some other influence leaves one social group or culture, without making satisfactory adjustment to another, finds himself on the margin of each but a member of neither.²

A marginal man can be said to be one who is caught "in between" two cultures or societies without wholly belonging to

¹Robert E. Park, "Introduction," in Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937) p. XV.

²Ibid., p. 3.

either one. This marginal situation is strongly experienced by Asian immigrants because they have moved in a different culture. They retain the cultures of their respective countries. It is their fate, therefore, to live in two cultures, switching back and forth, depending on with whom they are associated in certain situations. But when they are not accepted by the culturally dominant group, a marginal man is not only "in between" or "on the boundary", but also "outside" or at the periphery of the main group of a given society.³ This status of a marginal man becomes more unbearable when they have different physical traits. Park describes this with an example:

The chief obstacle to the cultural assimilation of races is not their different mental, but rather their divergent physical traits. It is not because of the mentality of the Japanese that they do not easily assimilate as do the Europeans. It is because.....he cannot become a mere individual, indistinguishable in the cosmopolitan mass of the population, as is true, for example, of the Irish, and to a lesser extent, of some of the other immigrant races. Japanese, like the Negro, is condemned to remain among us.....a symbol of his own race, but of the orient and of that vague, ill-defined menace we sometimes refer to as the "yellow peril." Under such circumstances peoples of different racial stocks may live side by side in a relation of symbiosis, each playing a role in a common economy, but not interbreeding to any great extent; each maintaining, like the gypsy or the parish peoples of India, a more or less complete tribal organization or society of their own.⁴

³Byong-Suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrant in America (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, AKCS, 1980) p. 39.

⁴E.C. Hughes, Race and Culture (Glencoe: Free Press, 1950) pp. 353-354.

Asian-Americans in this country have been floating on the surface like the oil in the water. This phenomenon will continue even among the second and third generations as long as their physical traits are distinguishable from those of the dominant group.

Stonequist, who elaborated on the psychological dimensions of the marginal man, defines the concept more broadly than Park. According to Stonequist, an individual who is caught in between two different races and cultures is likely to display a dual personality and have a "double consciousness." Usually the psychological dilemma of the marginal man is characterized as being ambivalent in attitudes and sentiments: divided loyalty being irrational, moody and tempermental; excessively self- and race-conscious, having feelings of inferiority, hypersensitive and hypercritical: hypocritic among people of the dominant culture and contemptuous of the people below him.⁵

The experiences of Asian immigrants may be too short to develop all the attributes of the marginal man's personality traits. Nevertheless, such states of mind develop among them as they try to adjust themselves to a new environment where the cultural conflict is intense and causes a deep inferiority complex and lack of sense of belonging.

⁵Dickie-Clark H.F., The Marginal Situation (New York: Humanities Press, 1966) pp. 8-9, cited by Sil Dong Kim, "Interracially Married Korean Women Immigrants: A Study in Marginality" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1979) p. 29.

ADAPTATION MODES

In order to avoid the cultural conflicts or solve them, the marginal man takes different adaptation routes. The three modes of adaptation Stonequist discusses as the possible avenues out of the marginal self-conception are the assimilation role, the intermediary role and the nationalist role.⁶

In the assimilation mode, the marginal person develops a conformist outlook to the new culture. He relinquishes his original heritage to the highest degree possible and through every means available, including "passing," "name changing," discarding foreign accents and intermarriage, seeks to lose his minority identification. This is an effort to remain invisible in a hostile social setting. These invisible ethnic minorities are found among professionals who have been trained in this country and had close working relations with dominant groups. They, sometimes, refuse to acknowledge or use their ethnic legacies and refuse to identify with specific ethnic racial communities.

In the intermediary or "go-between" mode, the marginal man seeks to negotiate an accommodation between dominants and minority members in a conciliatory way. They are viewed by the dominant members as peacemakers and resolvers of conflict issues. Also they are viewed by their ethnic community as spokesmen and leaders. Their "catchphrase" is integration.

⁶Stonequist, pp. 159-200.

The struggle of Martin Luther King, Jr. for freedom was based on the philosophy of integration. He was a peace-maker greatly influenced by the Christian practice of love and Mohandas Gandhi's non-violence movement. His goal was an integrated community between black and white, majority and minority, working together to establish the kingdom of God, community of love. His commitment, therefore, was two-sided: commitment to black, exciting, encouraging, empowering black people to struggle for equality; on the other hand, his commitment to white, trying to eliminate white racism and establish true democracy which, he thought, was the closest to Jesus' teaching. His dialectical approaches were attacked by some of his own people such as Malcolm X, who was representing nationalistic black racism.⁷

In the nationalistic mode, the marginal man seeks to get back to where he belongs. Sometimes he becomes militant, ethnocentric, and depending on the circumstances, strives for the group's independence from the control of the dominant group. Often this tendency leads to a full political activism with full ethnic community control as the goal. An outstanding example is the movement of black nationalistic segregation led by Malcolm X in the sixties. But this great black leader was not accepted in this society and assassinated by his own people.

⁷James Cone's lecture at Palmer Lecture, University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Wa., October 5-7, 1982.

What is the main motive for these different modes of adaptation in a hostile situation? For Asian immigrants, the writer thinks, it is a tactic for their survival under the most stressful marginal situations.

In the assimilation and go-between modes, the immigrants want to remain silent and invisible because in the face of negative treatment, disguised identity is safe. Becoming a model minority, quiet and diligent, they can stay out of trouble.

On the other hand, in the nationalistic mode, the Asian immigrants find their own protection, striving to transplant their old world into the new environment. Exclusive social activities with only the same racial group, persistence of old values, forming a sub-culture, and patriotism to their mother country, all provide the immigrants with a sense of belonging and safety.

IMMUNITY TO FAILURE

Another survival and assimilatory tactic which can be seen among the marginalized persons is "Immunity to Failure." Sil Dong Kim finds from the interracially married Korean women immigrants that their non-deviancy under stress is due to the immunity to failure.

In the case of the Korean women, the marginal situation contains a sort of defense mechanism in an individual's psychology called "immunity to failure" that functions for conformist behavior.⁸

⁸Sil Dong Kim, p. 40.

Immunity to failure equates with the Korean concept of "Chae Noem" (noble resignation). This value dominating the racially intermarried Korean woman's community, along with the concept, "Eui Ri" (righteous loyalty between friends), becomes the major governing value for the members to neutralize the feelings associated with the members' inability to overcome a variety of failures in the process of adjustment. Kim concludes that immunity to failure, which is not okay according to the dominant culture values, is a fundamental requirement for the marginal immigrants to become conformists and also to survive in the racist society because it helps them to face the challenges from the host culture. Kim says:

The sense of immunity to failure in the marginal man, then, functions for conformist behavior and can be called a psychological defense mechanism that not only dispels the negative feelings gotten from the society but also preserves his personal integrity from the pressure of not being able to pass the standards of the dominant group.⁹

On the other hand, the marginal man tries to achieve a conformist outlook through financial success which is most attainable in this discriminatory environment. The writer sees many Asian immigrants work so hard, running between two jobs, to buy nice houses in decent neighborhoods and save money to send their children to top-class colleges. Sometimes immunity to failure gives the marginal person courage to tackle the tremendous pressures without any feeling of failure, enabling him to break through the standard of the dominant group with financial success.

⁹Ibid., p. 45.

CRITICISM OF MELTING POT THEORY

This society has its own mechanism which pulls the aliens toward assimilation. This mechanism is based on the social model expressed in a drama, The Melting Pot, written by Israel Zangwill in 1908. As the nation was bewildered by increasing ethnic varieties with millions of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, people longed for peace and unity as dramatized in the play:

There she lies, the great Melting Pot - listen! Can't you hear the roaring and the bubbling. There gapes her mouth - the harbour where a thousand feeders come from the end of the world to pour in their human freight. Ah, what a stirring and seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian - black and yellow -

East and West, North and South, the palm and pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross - how the Great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God..... Peace, peace, to all, you unborn millions, fate to fill this giant continent.¹⁰

People envisioned the blending of races in a great pot - America - in which all the ethnic differences could be melted away or purged, and people could be fused together. The Melting Pot Theory - a total integration - sounds like an ideal, but it has not become a reality in the United States. Furthermore, the Melting Pot Theory is not even desirable.

Some reasons why the Melting Pot Theory is irrelevant and even not desirable can be summarized here:

First, the Melting Pot Theory is a racist's approach

¹⁰Cited by Roy I. Sano, From Every Nation Without Number (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982) pp. 28, 29.

by the white dominant group. The white majority wants all ethnic minorities to lose their distinctiveness and become like them. The Melting Pot Theory, therefore, is dominance of the white majority over ethnic minority groups. The dominant group has become the norm of the social class. Everyone who has entered this country must be melted in this pot and change according to the norm of the dominant group. Power must be under its own control based on the belief that whites are innately superior to the non-whites.

Second, Robert Park's claim of the race relation cycle - contact, competition, accommodation and assimilation - does not seem to be continuous and inevitable.¹¹ In most cases of Korean immigrants, for example, their contact with the dominant group is merely functional. They don't have much contact with the dominant group and culture in their social and cultural life. Only few people succeed in their competition mainly because of their language improficiency. Rather, competition leads to further frustration and realization of their marginality. Total accommodation to the culture of the dominant group is not seen particularly among the Asian-Americans, because they don't easily give up their cultural background to adopt the values and behaviors of another people, including language, diet, appreciation of music, dutch-pay, and much more.

¹¹Ibid., p. 30.

Rather, many ethnic minorities are developing a bicultural or multicultural aspect of their lives by maintaining their inherited cultural traditions while adopting new and different cultures.

Even though there has been an extensive amount of acculturation among some ethnic minorities, such as Japanese-Americans, there is a serious lag at the point of assimilation. Non-European immigrants are saying, "We may want to be like you (acculturation), but we want to set up our own time schedule when and how we will join you (assimilation)."12

Third, accommodation and assimilation is not "a one-way street." Many ethnic minorities are developing a bicultural or multicultural dimension as characterized by the hyphenated name "Asian-American" by retaining their cultural traditions while adopting new ones. On the other hand, whites are developing bicultural and multicultural qualities in their lives through extensive interactions between whites and colorful people.13

Living with a combination of both old and new values in the process of accommodation and assimilation is the fate

¹²Roy I. Sano, "Yes, We'll have no more Bananas in Church," in his The Theologies of Asian Americans and Pacific Peoples (Berkeley: Asian Center for Theology & Strategies, 1976) P. 53.

¹³Sano, From Every Nation, p. 32.

of the minority immigrants. It may cause internal conflicts and confusion. Also, it may enrich the lives of ethnic minorities as well as the white majority.

TWO-CATEGORY SYSTEM: AMERICAN RACISM

While both the white majority and ethnic minorities are dreaming of a total integration of this society in the melting pot, it has been uncovered that this society is still operating on racism.

Racism basically refers to the belief that one or more races are superior over other races. In the United States, racism means that whites are innately superior to non-whites.

Daniels and Kitano present "Two-Category System" as the most pervasive outcome of racial interactions in this society - the lighter the skin pigmentation the higher the status; the darker the skin pigmentation the lower the status.¹⁴ This simple and naive classification is based upon a faulty generalization - stereotypes, but the boundary of permeation in this society is determined by color.

The worst thing Daniels and Kitano mention is that:

The white majority group tends to develop an elaborate strategy to maintain the separation of itself and the minority group. Basically the strategy is simple. Power - political, economic and education - must be under its own control.¹⁵

¹⁴Roger Daniels and Harry H.L. Kitano, American Racism (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice-Hall, 1974) p. 90.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 97.

It is not uncommon that the more an ethnic minority tries to be one of the white majority, the more he finds that he can never be one of the dominant majority group. The more he tries to penetrate that higher social structure, the more he becomes frustrated by finding his power limited.

Daniels and Kitano observe the variations of reactions by the ethnic minority groups to this Two-Category System. Usually the variations are related to their culture and the seriousness of the situation. They state:

Although all the non-white groups were treated similarly, reactions to their non-white status reflect certain sub-cultural variations. The Negro, the most American and the current target, is responding in a typically American fashion - through violence. The Mexican is also beginning to use tactics of organization and militance, while the Oriental has up to now looked inwardly toward self and community.¹⁶

KOREAN-AMERICAN REALITY

Reflecting on Daniels and Kitano's observation, Korean immigrants seem to be one of the Oriental groups who look most inwardly toward self and community when they confront "white racism." While very few Korean immigrants attempt to assimilate into the dominant society, the majority withdraw into self or find a safety zone among their own people. It may be considered as an existential necessity.

De Vos elaborates this point well:

..... if a socially defined racial minority wishes to assimilate, but finds that intermarriage or other forms

¹⁶Ibid., p. 105.

of integration are withheld on the basis of race, the group is forced to select another alternative. It can accept an inferior caste status and a sense of basic inferiority as part of its collective self-definition..... Or it can define itself symbolically, creating a positive view of its heritage on the basis of cultural as well as racial distinctions, thereby establishing a sense of collective dignity.¹⁷

There are some social, cultural and psychological factors in making the Korean immigrants look inwardly toward self and their own community.

First of all, for the majority of the Korean immigrants, language barrier is the most crucial factor withholding them in the accommodation and assimilation process. The Korean immigrants are, relatively speaking, newcomers to this country. The mass Korean immigration began with the 1965 amendment to the immigration law. Learning a new language is not so simple as it sounds for the adults. English has a totally different linguistic root from Korean language. Many adult Korean immigrants have given up their efforts to master English beyond survival skills which are necessary for work or shopping. Language difficulty for Korean immigrants severely limits their cultural and social activities, relying heavily on Korean newspapers and Korean programs on TV for general information and entertainment, attending Korean churches, and shopping at Korean stores where the Korean language is used exclusively. The 1973 Asian-American Field Study conducted in Korea-Town in Los Angeles reports

¹⁷George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Rose (eds.) *Ethnicity* (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1975)p. 10, cited by Kim and Lee, p. 2.

that 98 percent of Koreans surveyed were using Korean as their primary language.¹⁸ English inefficiency for the Korean immigrants creates a subculture and community cohesiveness.

Secondly, another factor that contributes to community cohesiveness comes from the sense of dislocation, not only geographical and physical, but also cultural and psychological. Their ties with relatives and friends were rooted out. Their means of living have to be altered. They have fear of losing their own identity. Culture shock, loneliness, financial uncertainty, etc. make the dislocated Korean immigrants contact their own people and share with them who are in the same boat - common origin, plight and destiny.¹⁹

This tendency of community cohesiveness appears very strong among the first-generation immigrants. For them nativism serves as a defense mechanism against culture shock. Even though this conservative nativism may be weakened in the process of acculturation and in their children, still, their ethnic attachment will continue even after race becomes a less crucial factor for social assimilation.²⁰

¹⁸U.S. Department of H.E.W., 1974, cited by Kim and Lee, p. 88.

¹⁹Won Moo Hurh, "Toward a New Community and Identity: The Korean-American Ethnicity," in Kim and Lee, p. 11.

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

Thirdly, this may be a temporary phenomenon but community cohesiveness contributes for the Korean immigrants to maintain or develop self-esteem. They can exercise leadership in their own community, which is almost impossible in the majority community until their language barriers are overcome. Through ethnic organizations and ethnic churches, they find opportunities to do something for the community as well as for themselves. Particularly, Korean churches in this country are the only voluntary community where individual leadership can be exercised to its maximum. This builds up their self-esteem and pride in being ethnic minorities.

Korean immigrants are in marginal situations in which they neither can become American nor remain in their ethnicity forever. They are to be Korean-American, the hyphenized people. A Korean-American needs to pursue a new identity - a sense of completeness - relating to the society they have adopted and to their own ethnic origin.

Chapter III

THEOLOGY OF IMMIGRATION

Asian-American Christians have frequently seen themselves as pilgrims, sojourners, exiles, aliens and strangers. All these biblical symbols are traits of a marginal man. Therefore, how to live in a marginal situation is not only a socio-political issue, but also a theological issue. Sang Hyun Lee states:

The problem of how to live an honest, authentic life in the face of marginality without escaping is in the final analysis a theological issue. Where, and how can we attain the grace and faith which can give us that essential courage with which we can withstand the negative dimensions of our marginal existence?¹

The major theological questions for the Asian immigrants are: what is God doing in and through the marginal situation; how can we find the central message of the gospel in this American wilderness; what is our duty, responsibility and hope as the disciples of Christ in the land of immigration?

Theology of immigration is, of course, built upon the context of immigration, but it never loses universality because the marginal condition is to ascertain the degree of the universal predicament of all men and women.

¹Sang Hyun Lee, "Called To Be Pilgrims: Toward a Theology within the Korean Immigrant Context," in Byong-suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrant In America (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, 1980) p. 42.

BIBLICAL INQUIRIES

Abraham's Journey: Creative Dislocation

Abraham and his wife, Sarah, are among the most prominent figures in the Bible who were called out to be pilgrims (Gen. 23:4; Heb. 11:13). Their stories illumine the experiences of Asian immigrants and also deepen their Christian identity and hope.

First, Abraham left his country to go to another land with the promise that the Lord would make lives better for him and his children (Gen. 12:1-3). It was a radical break from his country, kindred and father's house, which were so dear to him. Abraham went out and sojourned, not knowing where he was going and what was in store for him (Heb. 11:8). God did not provide him any itinerary or road map. His destination was simply described as "the land that I will show you" (Gen. 12:1). Abraham's sojournment was really what it means to live by faith trusting the One who calls (Heb. 11:8).

Second, on Abraham's part, transformation took place slowly but progressively on the rough roads of sojournment. On the roads he received a sacred calling. On the roads he had to listen to the voice of God. He felt on the roads his relationship with God was alive, unique and personal. So, every place he went, he built an altar to worship the Lord, expressing his gratitude toward the One who appeared to him and gave strength and guidance (Gen. 12:7).

Third, blessings were given to Abraham and his wife

through the covenant on the roads. They found their lives rich with the promise of their heirs and descendants, as many as the stars and sands (Gen. 14:1-6), and the land which would be given to their descendants (Gen. 15:17-20).

Fourth, God's blessing upon Abraham has another dimension. God promised that he would make Abraham a blessing upon others. "I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you, I will curse; and by you, all the families of the earth shall bless themselves" (Gen. 12:3). This is a strong support for the fact that sojourners and immigrants become a blessing on the people of the land.

Finally, Abraham did not stop his journey when he entered Canaan. Abraham and Sarah sojourned in the land of promise "living in tents," acknowledging that they were strangers and exiles in a foreign land (Heb. 11:9, 13). Abraham and his family journeyed on "looking forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Abraham did not receive all the blessings which were promised to them. He only glimpsed the promise and greeted it from afar. It remained a vision.

Abraham's sojournment provides a tremendous insight for Asian immigrants. Abraham's story tells us that the nature of the immigrant's life is to be "on journey". That means: called out of the past; transforming process in the wilderness; covenant which leads to a blessing on self and others; and continuous moves to seek a better society.

Like Abraham and his wife, Sarah, Asian-Americans are

immigrants and children of immigrants who have left behind many things dear to them - comfort, security and delight in being with their own kind. Breaking ties with the familiar is painful. And the pains of the immigrants are doubled by the hostile environment in the land of their new habitat.

Living in the wilderness of marginality without any purpose is a curse. Asian immigrants, therefore, have to find some purposes and reasons which may make their lives bearable and creative. It means that they have to begin their theology right in the praxis of wilderness - marginality. Sang Hyun Lee describes the marginality as a reasonable basis for a sacred calling:

To go out from one's homeland and live on the cultural and social boundary line means to be freed from the dominance of one culture or one society..... Marginality, therefore, is like the night or desert where all of our little and petty concerns recede into the background and give way to our more ultimate concerns and more significant aspirations. This is why whenever God calls certain men and women to work as his creative coworkers, he takes them out of their life of security and thrusts them into the wide-open space of wilderness. He wants his servants to be "in the world but not of the world."²

We see a creative potentiality emerging in the marginal persons with a sacred calling through a covenant initiated by God in the wilderness.

Furthermore, marginal persons can be considered as a means for a better society, just as Abraham was a determining factor of whether the people of the countries Abraham sojourned around would be blessed or cursed (Gen. 12:3).

² Ibid., p. 48.

Divine logic was that he would bless those who treated the strangers and sojourners, and curse those who mistreated them. It should be emphasized that a more humanistic society would be brought about not from above - the principalities and majority - but from below - the powerless and marginalized. Marginalized persons, therefore, are to be used as the "earthen vessels" through which they can "show that the transcendant power belongs to God and not to us " (2 Cor. 4:7). This is why Jesus always took the side of the oppressed, the poor, the widows and the children.

The marginality in Asian immigrants forces them to continue to journey on "looking forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). For Asian immigrants the present society, which is rooted in racism, is not the true picture of the land they immigrated into. They cannot go back to their home countries with disappointment. They cannot settle down yet in the present situation which always makes them victims and scapegoats. They live from the end - the day when the divine promise will be fulfilled. This eschatological promise dominates whole history, but it is most strongly understood and longed for by the marginal persons, like Asian immigrants, who do not have their roots here in this country.

Exodus: Continuing Process of Liberation

The Exodus event was a long process in which Israelites were freed from their bondage and became a holy nation. Beginning from the hypothesis that the Exodus marks the real

commencement of Israel's history, several important observations can be made.

A first observation is that the Exodus was the leap of faith, trusting in the transcendent intervention of Yahweh. As John H. Yoder points out, the Exodus was not a program by the people, but a miracle. Yoder says the Exodus was:

..... not a rationally planned and pragmatically executed military operation..... The Red Sea event is the symbol of the confession that the Israelites did not lift a hand to save themselves. They only trust, and venture out.³

Therefore, the presupposition for the actual Exodus was peoplehood which was formed prior to the Exodus through their memory and recital of the God of their fathers. Even before there could be a Moses and a people to hear him, there had to be an oppressed community affirming its identity by crying out to their God and the God of their fathers.⁴ The Exodus was the result of the congruency of the dual identification - the identity of the people and the identity of the liberating God. Yoder confirms this by saying that "Goshen is prior to Exodus" which means that "peoplehood is the presupposition, not the product of Exodus."⁵

³John H. Yoder, "Exodus and Exile: The Two Faces of Liberation," Cross Currents 23 (Fall 1973) 300. Yoder's seems identical with Moltmann's, which is criticized by Gutierrez. Gutierrez clearly dissociates himself from Moltmann's interpretation of the Exodus, saying, "We are far from the position of Jurgen Moltmann.....which would give the impression that he does not keep sufficiently in the mind man's participation in his own liberation." Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973) p. 182.

⁴Yoder, p. 301

⁵Ibid.

A second observation is Moses' leadership in the Exodus event. Moses was called by Yahweh and received the mission to lead the Israelites out of the bondage. But "in fact he was called because he was a leader."⁶ Before he was called he had happened to have a unique cultural experience that produced the man Moses - an amalgam of three cultures: that of the Israelite slaves, the Egyptian court and the desert.⁷ This tricultural identity of Moses was the prerequisite for his conscientization and implementation of the Exodus.

Moses is an Israelite identified with his people who were under the oppression by the Egyptians. At the same time, he was mature enough to see the wider world beyond his tribal culture through his experience in the Egyptian court. Then, his religious experience in solitude in the desert, working for his father-in-law, led him to a commitment in God's liberating event.

A third observation is the continuing process of liberation in Exodus. The liberation from the bondage was not an end, but a beginning for the reconstitution of community around the liberator, Yahweh. Exodus did not lead the Israelites to the promised land but to the desert. In that desert, the Israelites had to go through a process which led them to

⁶J. Severino Croatto, Exodus: A Hermeneutics of Freedom (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981) p. 27.

⁷Yoder, pp. 310-302.

the consciousness of freedom in God at the communal level of the people through the covenant and the laws. But, prior to the formal constitution of Israel as a community, the Israelites failed to be patient with God, waiting for the Word of God from the mountain. They preferred to take things into their own hands by making a golden calf under Aaron's leading (Ex. 32). This was "a new enslavement activated partly by loyalty to the values of Egypt."⁸ Liberation gained from slavery in Egypt, even through violent intervention of Yahweh, was no guarantee for a continuing process of liberation. Exodus was not completed by "going out" from the oppression of Egypt. People went back to their old loyalty and values. Therefore, entering the land where the people would serve God - the Covenant at Sinai - was a post-requisite for the Israelites to be the liberated people. In other words, "liberation is from bondage and for covenant, and what for matters more than what from."⁹

The Exodus story brings many lessons to Asian immigrants in this country.

A first lesson is the awareness that what really makes liberation possible is the consciousness of freedom developed through generations. We see this consciousness among native Americans, Blacks and Asian-Americans who have long histories of oppression. Forming peoplehood as oppressed

⁸Ibid., p. 304

⁹Ibid., cf. Gutierrez, p. 36.

people, and the children of God is a prerequisite for one's journey of freedom contesting with the principalities and powers.

A second lesson we can learn from the Exodus story is that Asian-Americans have multi-cultural experiences which provide identities with their own culture and also with the outer world beyond their tribal culture. This is the qualification for Moses to be a great leader for the liberating action of God. Personally, the writer expects this qualification from many Asian-Americans.

A third lesson is that leaving behind the poverty, oppression and old values does not mean the acquisition of freedom. For instance, there are many Korean-Americans who are enslaved to the things they left in their old country - materialism, myth of success and myth of ethnocentrism, etc. Korean-Americans should seek new identity - pilgrim personhood - constituted around the liberator, God, so that they can march forward to a new city where total and universal salvation can be found.

Exile: Common Ministry

Liberating action of God is not limited to the Exodus event.¹⁰ It continues even in the failure of the monarch or

¹⁰The priority given to the Exodus event by the liberation theologians for their reflection on praxis has been challenged by Yoder. He suggested that the Exile theme has greater hermeneutical possibilities in the theology of liberation. See Yoder, pp. 305-309

in the Exile.

The exiles taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon were living under a pagan oppressor without their own nationhood. But the prophet Jeremiah saw the will of Yahweh and the mission of the people even in the life of exile:

These are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon..... It said: "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream, for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord" (Jer. 29:1, 4-9).

Jeremiah denounced the false dreams of speedy return prophesied by the false prophets like Shemiah and Hananiah. Jeremiah stated that they would be in Babylon for a long time. They should seek the peace of that city, identifying their welfare with its welfare. This is the mission of the exiles - reforming of the existing order into the higher sovereignty that is proclaimed by the Hebrew monotheist. This is the saving message of the resident minority.¹¹ We read the same mission in Joseph in Egypt, in Daniel under Nebuchadnezzar,

¹¹Yoder, p. 307.

Esther and Mordecai in Persia, and Ruth, a non-Israelite ancestor of David and Jesus. These biblical examples show what can best be done by creative minorities in a society where they do not belong or control. This model was, also, taken by the New Testament church - missionaries sent to the Gentiles because of their persecution.

From an Asian-American Christian point of view, diaspora continues, and so does the mission of God, transforming the society through the creative minorities.

JUSTICE OF GOD

The interaction between social praxis and theological reflection is the most decisive methodological factor in theology of immigration. Its praxis is marginality, and its theological theme should be justice.

The Concept of Justice in the Old Testament

One of the most central themes in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament is the concept of justice of God.

G. von Rad writes: "There is absolutely no concept in the O.T. with so central a significance for all relationships of human life as that of *sedāqāh* (justice/righteousness)."¹²

The Hebrew word for justice¹³ touches every level of

¹²G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962) I, 370.

¹³The justice of Yahweh in the O.T. is virtually equated with righteousness, steadfast love and faithfulness. See Ps. 89:14.

human existence from political life to the interpersonal life. Justice for the Hebrews is the foundation on which the life of the community is established and also maintained. Laws are just because they create harmony with the community and sustain the life of the community. Yahweh is called just not only as lawgiver, but he restores the community when it is threatened. That is why his saving deeds are called "just deeds."¹⁴

In general terms the biblical idea of justice is described as "fidelity to the demands of a relationship"¹⁵ with God and with others.

In the Old Testament we see two levels of justice: one is the justice of Yahweh; the other is the justice of the individuals.

Yahweh is proclaimed as just (2 Chr. 12:6; Neh. 9:8; Ps. 7:9; 103:17; 116:5; Jer. 9:24; Dan. 9:14; Zeph. 3:5; Zech. 8:8). God's primary attribute of action is justice (Gen. 18:25; Ps. 9:5). His commandments to men are essentially for the purpose of the establishment of justice in the world (Ps. 119:137-144).

Sometimes Yahweh punishes sinners and iniquitors, but it is not for vengeance. It is an integral part of restoration

¹⁴John R. Donahue, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," in John C. Haughey (ed.) The Faith That Does Justice (New York: Paulist Press, 1977) p. 69.

¹⁵E. Achtemeier, "Righteousness in the O.T." in Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) IV, 80.

of the broken justice.¹⁶ The justice of Yahweh is, therefore, his saving power and his fidelity to the covenant he made with his people.

Yahweh, alone, determines what righteousness is and who is righteous, because justice is his nature. It is man's obligation to imitate the divine quality of justice. Yahweh is defender of the oppressed, and he always demands special concern for the widow, the orphan, the poor and the stranger in the land.

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear them cry; and wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless (Ex. 22:21-24).

.....and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your town, shall come and eat and be filled; that the Lord God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do (Dt. 14:29).

Jeremiah affirms Yahweh's concern for the poor and shows that knowing Yahweh involves the doing of justice.

Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place (Jer. 22:3).

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing, and does not give him his wages;

Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness?

¹⁶Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁷Rad, p. 379

Then it was well with him.
 He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
 then it was well.
 Is not this to know me? says the Lord (Jer. 22:13, 15-16).

In this test, there is no division between "knowing"
 of God and doing of justice.

Amos proclaims to Israel that their fidelity to
 Yahweh must be manifest in their concern for the poor and
 oppressed.

I hate, I despise your feasts,
 and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies,
 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal
 offerings,
 I will not accept them,
 and the peace offerings of your fatted beasts
 I will not look upon.
 Take away from me the noise of your songs;
 to the melody of your harps I will not listen.
 But let justice roll down like waters,
 and righteousness like an everflowing stream
 (Am. 5:21-24).

And the sign of justice in peace, prosperity and
 fertility in the land (Ps. 112:)

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
 who greatly delights in his commandments!
 His descendants will be mighty in the land;
 the generation of the upright will be blessed.
 Wealth and riches are in his house;
 and his righteousness endures forever.
 Light rises in the ~~dark~~ness for the upright;
 the Lord is gracious, merciful, and righteous.
 It is well with the man who deals generously and lends,
 who conducts his affairs with justice.
 For the righteous will never be moved;
 he will be remembered forever.
 He is not afraid of evil tidings;
 his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.
 His heart is steady, he will not be afraid,
 until he sees his desire on his adversaries.
 He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
 his righteousness endures forever;
 his horn is exalted in honor.

This is the biblical notion, that the goods of this earth are the sign of the right relationship with Yahweh, as well as the means to create harmony within the community.¹⁸

One striking thing dominant throughout the whole Bible is that the marginal group in society - the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the aliens - are the criteria by which the justice of the whole society is weighed. The writer believes this is still so in the United States. The marginal persons, the ethnic minorities in this land, are the criteria by which the justice of this society is to be weighed before God.

Jesus as the Justice of God

In the New Testament the revelation of God's justice is linked with the life and death of Jesus. Therefore, we have to re-image Jesus in terms of God's justice.

1. Justice - Jesus' Main Concern. Jesus' ministry begins with a proclamation: "The Kingdom of God is at hand; Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15; cf. Mt. 4:17). This is an announcement that God's reign has started; that the justice and mercy of God is to be manifested in history through Jesus Christ - the proclaimer and the content of the proclaimed.

In Mary's canticle, Jesus is proclaimed as one who is to show the saving mercy and justice of God:

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on those who fear him

from generation to generation.
 He has shown strength with his arm,
 he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their
 hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones,
 and exalted those of low degree;
 he has filled the hungry with good things,
 and the rich he has sent empty away.
 He has helped his servant Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,
 as he spoke to our fathers,
 to Abraham and to his posterity forever (Lk. 1:46b-55).

Also, this is reaffirmed by Jesus' reading from the
 book of the prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
 because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk. 4:18,19;
 cf. Is. 61:1,2).

Matthew connects Jesus' healing ministry with the
 mission of the servant Messiah:

Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,
 my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased.
 I will put my Spirit upon him,
 and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
 He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
 nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;
 he will not break a bruised reed
 or quench a smoldering wick,
 till he brings justice to victory;
 and in his name will the Gentiles hope (Mt. 12:18-21;
 Is. 42:1-4).

The key address Jesus gave to teach the meaning of
 justice in the kingdom of God, which is coming into existence
 through him, is the Sermon on the Mount. Two Beatitudes
 mention righteousness and justice. The first one is:
 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
 for they shall be satisfied" (Mt. 5:6). The second one is:

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:10). The Beatitudes describe that God will establish the right order, when his reign has its full effect, even though human conditions now involve mourning, poverty, strife and persecution.¹⁸

Jesus concludes his Sermon on the Mount with a further remark: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Mt. 6:33).

Jesus' main concern from the beginning of his ministry was justice of God - right relations with God and with others - and just human affairs. Jesus was confident that "the righteousness" received from God would begin to reorder human chaos.¹⁹

2. Jesus' Identification with the Marginalized. Jesus does not just proclaim the sovereignty of God's justice and its fulfillment, but he becomes a parable of God's justice by reaching out to the marginal ones in the world. Donahue explains it:

By his fellowship with the toll collectors and sinners, Jesus makes present the love and saving mercy of God to those whom the social structures of his time would classify as unjust and beyond the pale of God's loving concern. Jesus' association with these groups is a form of symbolic activity which proclaims that those ritual laws which were designed to protect the sanctity and justice of God concealed the revelation of the true God.²⁰

¹⁸John C. Haughey, "Jesus as the Justice of God," in Haughey, p. 276.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 280.

²⁰Donahue, p. 87.

Jesus identifies himself with the suffering members of the society - the poor, the outcasts, and the marginalized. And the criterion Jesus uses in determining who are just and unjust in the end-times is what the individuals in the nations have done to the least of their brethren with whom Jesus fully identifies himself (Mt. 25:3ff). Those who meet the needs of those poor, sick, oppressed and marginalized "are touched by the righteousness of God because they have served his Son who incarnates that righteousness."²¹ Therefore, doing of justice to the least of the brethren is serving of Christ, and the serving of Christ is a "salvific event for the server."²²

3. The Crucified Christ as the Wounded Healer.

Christian faith stands with the mystery of the crucified Christ. God's love is revealed in the crucified Christ. God, himself, suffers in the suffering of Christ, his Son.²³ In the suffering and death, Jesus identified himself with those who were enslaved, and took their pain upon himself. In the suffering of the crucified Christ, the oppressed and the enslaved find a wounded healer. They experience healings which the crucified Christ-God brings through his own wounds and suffering. In fellowship with the crucified Christ, those who are deprived of freedom, dignity and humanity, find respect, recognition, human

²¹Haughey, p. 281. ²²Ibid.

²³Jürgen Moltmann, The Crucified God (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) p. 47.

dignity and hope.²⁴ Therefore, God's call to discipleship is also a call to take part in and fulfil the continuing sufferings of Christ. Following the Christ requires giving up oneself - one's security, self-preoccupation and self-interest, and participating in the future of God, which has begun already, and will be consummated in the last day.

This active dimension of justice in the crucified Christ was proved in Jesus' resurrection. The death and the resurrection "spelled an end to the powers that put him to death." In and through both the cross and resurrection the believer can see the beginning of a new source of power and justice and vindication.²⁵

The price for the establishment of justice was paid by his crucifixion, and the transcending power over the injustice was released through his resurrection.

Eschatology as the Fulfillment of the Justice of God

If justice is viewed in terms of right relations with God and with others, it is the substance of the kingdom of God in the last day. A new heaven and new earth are grounded in the justice of God.

The salvation - a complete fulfillment of the justice of God - can be given through Jesus Christ, his past, his present and his future. The Christ's redemptive word is not just

²⁴Ibid., p. 49

²⁵Hughey, p. 274.

an event of the past, but an ever-present event and an eschatological event in and beyond time, because the abiding significance of the cross is that it is the judgment of the world and the deliverance of man. It is important to know that it is the same Christ who lived on earth as a suffering yet forgiving Servant, and who will come again and establish the kingdom of God.

Here is a tension between the future action of God and man's participation in it. This tension seems to be a starting point of divergent views between liberation theologians in Latin America and European theologians, such as Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jurgen Moltmann.

Eschatology in liberation theology seems present-oriented because the starting point of their theology is the present praxis. J. Andrew Kirk says:

When too much emphasis falls on the 'not yet,' the urgency of the present (the 'now' of fulfillment) praxis of justice and liberation tends to be removed or to become relative.²⁶

But, responding to Moltmann's criticism on the methodology of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutierrez answers:

To reflect critically on the praxis of liberation is not to "limp after" reality. The present, in the praxis of liberation, in its deepest sense, is pregnant with the future; hope must be an inherent part of our present commitment in history.²⁷

²⁶J. Andrew Kirk, Liberation Theology (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979) p. 136.

²⁷Gutierrez, p. 14.

Gutierrez criticizes that Moltmann's challenge to the present is derived from the ultimate horizon of the future, so that the present finite horizon is denied or relativized.²⁸

For Gutierrez, theology is rather "to penetrate the present reality, the movement of history, that which is driving history toward the future."²⁹ In the liberating praxis, man moves toward fulfillment of the kingdom of God, which is given to men in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without the excitement and joining in the definite growth of the kingdom of God through the promises realized here and now, the promise of the future cannot be attainable.

Gutierrez values political liberation here and now because sin is the fundamental obstacle to the kingdom and also a root of all misery and injustice. This sin can be conquered through a radical liberation which will result in "A transition from sin to grace, from death to life, from injustice to justice, from subhuman to the human."³⁰

Gutierrez's eschatology seems to be based on optimism on humanity that the revolutionary process will generate the kind of man who critically analyzes the present situation and controls its destiny.

²⁸Ibid., p. 217. Also, see Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) p. 16.

²⁹Gutierrez, p. 15.

³⁰Ibid., p. 176.

But, what about the existence of evil power which blocks out human participation in building the kingdom of God? Can man, himself, move toward the fulfillment of the kingdom of God, which is characterized with justice, unity, harmony and peace? Without faith and hope in the coming kingdom of God, the power of the future of God, which creates and determines the very present, man will eventually drop out of his efforts.

Pannenberg's eschatology starts with the power of God coming toward us from the future and creates the present. For Pannenberg the present is a contingent act of God. He says:

..... every event in which the future becomes finitely present must be understood as a contingent act of God, who places that finite reality into being by distinguishing it from his own powerful future.³¹

Pannenberg sees the unity of the past and present in the future of God. God is the ultimate future, and the past events are a preliminary share of the finite future and of a finite destiny. Pannenberg says:

Only in this way can I remember the past with gratitude or sorrow, knowing that past events did not occur as matters of inexorable fact but occurred contingently. And so we can now understand even our past as the creation of the coming God.³²

³¹Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Kingdom of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977)p. 61.

³²Ibid.

The world needs an eschatology which is based on the unifying power of God which affects the world in the process of redemption, not only in the temporal future, but in the final day - universal salvation. This unifying power of God revealed in Jesus Christ, crucified and resurrected, is the source of our hope, which leads to our participation in God's salvific acts.

John B. Cobb connects this hope with our responsibilities:

The hope in the unifying power of God increases the sense of the urgency of responsible action now, but it also increases our interest in ways of conceiving a fulfilling future other than continuance or consummation of our earthly history.³³

The above discussions shine a light upon the faith of pilgrimage. For Asian immigrants their past, present and future can be understood in light of God's unifying power, which was revealed on the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their past is redeemed with new meaning; their present brings a new challenge; and their hope in the future opens a new vision of the new heaven and earth - fulfillment of God's justice. This will be all unified in the ultimate future of God - the reign of God. The day will come "when Jesus delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:24-25). When we live

³³John B. Cobb, "What is the Future? - A process Perspective," in Ewert H. Cousins (ed.) Hope and the Future of Man (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972) p. 14.

under the reign of God, the marginalized will not be "managed, manipulated, outwitted or outmaneuvered by the independent dynamic power of Racism,"³⁴ because the ruling principles in the kingdom of God will be unity, justice, love and peace. This reign of God is visualized in the Book of Revelation:

Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:3,4).

..... and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:9,10).

..... And its gates shall never be shut by day - and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations (Rev. 21:25,26).

The full reality of the kingdom is "in the future," and it is a promise, but Christians are called to love corresponding to the modes of the kingdom. These modes of the kingdom must relate to the well-being of all peoples, because they are based on justice, love, inclusiveness, unity and self-surrender to God and others.

³⁴Roy I. Sano, From Every Nation Without Number (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982) p. 97.

Chapter IV

KOREAN IMMIGRANT CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

According to the 1980 census, the number of Asian and Pacific Island Americans has increased by 120 percent over the past decades to 3.5 millions while whites have grown by 6.4 percent, blacks by 17.4 percent and Hispanics by 60.8 percent.¹ And Korean-Americans are one of the fastest growing ethnic minorities in the United States. Since the revision of the U. S. Immigration Law² in 1965, the number of Korean immigrants increased about 1,300 percent between 1965 and 1974. As of the end of June, 1982, it is reported that there were 736,000 Koreans in the population of the United States. This figure increased by 55,000 from the previous year.³

Along with this continual influx of Korean immigrants, Korean churches in this country have become a vital center for the immigrants. A brief survey of the history of Korean immigration and its characteristics will be very helpful in understanding their problems and rules of Korean churches in this country.

¹"Asian-Americans: A Model Minority," Newsweek (December 6, 1982) 39.

²Public Law 89-236, October 3, 1965, abolishing the long-standing inequitable quota system which discriminated against Asian immigrants.

³Joong-ang Daily News, U.S. Edition (January 21, 1983) 20. This is the latest report by Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea.

HISTORY OF KOREAN IMMIGRATION

Korean immigration to this country began in 1903, when a group of 55 men, 21 women, 13 children and 12 babies arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii as laborers in a sugar plantation.⁴ In the succeeding two years about 11,000 Koreans came to Hawaii. But, during the four decades between 1905 (due to the loss of Korea's diplomatic power to Japan) and 1945 (the end of World War II) there had been virtually no Korean immigration to the United States with the exception of some "picture brides" of the contract laborers, students and political asylum from Japanese control of Korea. Bok-Lim Kim describes the characteristics of the Korean immigrants of this era as follows:

The unique characteristic of the Korean immigrants of this era was their perception of themselves as temporary sojourners who would depart from the United States as soon as the political situation in Korea permitted their return. In the case of earlier contract laborers, many of them became quite active in the Korean independence movement after several powerful political leaders (such as Syngman Rhee, Korea's first president - the writer's note) arrived in the United States seeking political asylum. This preoccupation had a profound effect on their life style: all of their energy, talents and attention were focused on overthrowing the Japanese rule and regaining Korea's independence. This orientation and the small size of the Korean community created a peculiar

⁴Warren Y. Kim, Koreans in America (Seoul: Po Chin Chai, 1971) pp. 10-11, cited by Sil Dong Kim, "Interracially Married Korean Women Immigrants: A Study in Marginality" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1979) p. 61.

condition of social isolation which separated them from the large American community and even from other Asian groups.⁵

American soldiers stationed in Korea after World War II, Korean conflicts of 1950-53, and political unrest, economic instability, tension between North and South Korea, together with gradual relaxation of the United States immigration policy, have significantly contributed to the increase in Korean immigrants.⁶ Especially the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the repeal of immigration quotas in 1965 opened the way to de-discrimination in racial minorities' lives. Affirmative Action Policy in 1972 increased minority employment to the level of population proportions in public and private sectors.

For many Korean immigrants America is "The land of opportunity." Economic betterment, educational opportunity for their children, family union, political freedom, etc. are the main reasons for them to immigrate to this country.

CHARACTERISTICS OF KOREAN IMMIGRANTS

While we hear many success stories of Asian Americans, characterized by white society as "Model Minority,"⁷ many

⁵Bok-Lim C. Kim, "An Appraisal of Korean Immigrant Service Needs," in Colleen Chun (ed.), Korean American Christian Identity and Calling (Berkeley: Pacific & Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies), p. 54.

⁶Ibid.

⁷"Asian-Americans," pp. 39-51.

new Korean immigrants are facing a social dilemma arising from their identity crisis, language barriers, racism, separation from families, difficulties in cultural adjustment, etc. Some Korean immigrants enjoy the nation's highest median family income⁸ and try to be melted in this society, but, they remain as minority members of this society. Unlike European minorities, Korean-Americans never become wholly Americanized. As Chan-Hie Kim, Director of the Center for Asian-American Ministries at the School of Theology at Claremont, points out, Korean-Americans have their own confusion under the pressures of Americanization:

The American society experienced by Korean-Americans is not a melting pot but an Anglo pressure cooker in which diverse cultures are boiled together to the point⁹ that they lose their individual savors and identities.

Bok-Lim C. Kim classifies the Korean population in the United States in three broad categories:¹⁰ (1) senior citizens who immigrated as young people, who are small in numbers, but probably most needful of social services; (2) spouses and children of United States citizens, a majority of whom were United States servicemen stationed in Korea; and (3) "Quota immigrants" and their families. Among these

⁸Ibid., p. 39.

⁹Chan-Hie Kim, "Biblical and Theological Basis of Korean-American Ministry," in Chun, p. 48.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 54.

three groups, there are significant differences in terms of their socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, as well as of values, orientations and service needs.

There are several studies done by Korean-American scholars and social service agencies on the Korean population in this country.¹¹ Some common findings from their studies can be summarized as follows:

1. For the most part, the Korean immigrants are relatively young, in their 30's and 40's, with the female being a little younger than the male.¹²

2. The majority of the Korean-Americans are newcomers. A survey finds that 51 percent of the Korean households' heads moved to the United States since 1975 and only 7 percent were found to be American-born.¹³

3. One distinct characteristic of the Koreans in the United States is high educational level. Korean-Americans' educational level is higher than other Asian-American groups. A nation-wide mail survey of Koreans in the United States

¹¹Won Moo Hurh, Bok-Lim C. Kim, Hyung-Chan Kim, Kwang Chung Kim, Sil Dong Kim, Eui-Young Yu, Philip Kyung Sik Park, Wayne Patterson, and others.

¹²Bok-Lim C. Kim, The Asian Americans: Changing Patterns, Changing Needs (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, 1978) p. 178.

¹³Eui-Young Yu, "Demographic Profile of Koreans in Los Angeles: Size, Composition, and Distribution." A paper presented at the meeting, Koryo Research Institute, Los Angeles, March 10, 1979.

finds that 66.5 percent of the respondents completed college education.¹⁴ The 1978 survey of Korean blue collar workers in Chicago also finds that 58 percent of the male and 49 percent of the female respondents completed their college education prior to their immigration into the United States.¹⁵

4. Economic achievements among Korean-Americans are also high. It is a well-known fact that Korean-Americans are able to purchase their homes within two or three years after they arrive in this country. The 1979 nationwide sample survey of Koreans shows that 68 percent of Korean families live in their own homes.¹⁶ But it is pointed out that the economic achievements among the Korean-Americans are not due to their high-paid occupations, but due to working extremely hard to prosper. Koreans work more hours than their American counterparts. Nearly half work more than 9 hours a day; about 20 percent work more than 10 hours a day. A quarter of the Korean workers work during the evening and night hours. Nearly half work on weekends.¹⁷

¹⁴Joong-ang Daily News, U. S. Edition (September 25, 1979) 16.

¹⁵Won M. Hurh, Hei C. Kim and Kwang C. Kim, Assimilation Patterns of Immigrants in the United States: A Case Study of Korean Residents in the Chicago Area (Washington: University Press of America, 1978) p. 17.

¹⁶Joong-ang Daily News (September 25, 1979)

¹⁷Eui-Young Yu, "Koreans in America: Social and Economic Adjustments," in Byong suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrant in America (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, 1980) p. 83.

It should be pointed out that the Korean-American's economic achievements are the results of their hard work from dawn-to-midnight hours by entire families. It seems that many Korean immigrants sacrifice family life and other social life to achieve material prosperity.

5. Some Korean immigrants work so hard that they do not have time to be bothered by racial discrimination. But the majority of new immigrants are having tremendous pressures. The most frequently expressed problem is the language barrier. Bok-Lim Kim's study shows that 89.3 percent of the Korean respondents reported difficulties with language in their adjustment to the new life in the United States.¹⁸ Also there are strong social pressures among Korean-Americans toward the use of the Korean language when talking with other Korean persons. This social pressure results from their patriotic attachments to their culture. Besides that they have uneasiness in addressing one another in English because it has no honorific forms for elders. These social pressures definitely slow the acquisition of English proficiency by Koreans. English improficiency is a major obstacle for the Korean-Americans who try to make a new life in the United States. Language difficulty limits their employments in competitive fields although they well qualify. Their social activities are limited to their own people. They rely heavily on Korean newspapers for general information

¹⁸Joong-ang Daily News (September 25, 1979)

affecting their daily lives.¹⁹ English improficiency also makes it difficult for them to communicate with their children who speak English. Eui-Young Yu states that problem:

English-speaking children tend to look down on their parents because of their broken English and authoritarian attitudes..... Parents in the divided language families can neither provide guidance nor earn respect from their children.²⁰

6. In contrast to the relative success in economic life, Korean-Americans are experiencing many difficulties in family life and mental health. Korean males, who grew up in the male-dominant society in Korea, seem to suffer from the loss of their status in this country on top of their frustration caused by language difficulties and racial prejudice. They become helpless before their wives and children, or become violent to blow off their accumulated anger. In fact, the incidents of family breakdown appear to be rising at an alarming rate among Korean immigrants.²¹ On the other hand, undetermined numbers of Korean wives, married to American servicemen, are experiencing severe marital and family problems in addition to traumatic cultural adjustment. The problems many Korean wives frequently encounter in clinical settings include:

a high incidence of suicide attempts, cultural shock and situational maladjustments, severe marital discord, mental and emotional disturbances, financial difficulties, in-law conflicts and a high incidence of spouse and child abuse.²²

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Yu, "Koreans in America," p. 89.

²¹Ibid., p. 91

²²Daniel Booduck Lee, "Military Transcultural Marriage: A Study of Marital Adjustment Between American Husbands and Korean-Born Spouses," (S.W.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1980) p.3.

These problems become further complicated and critical because many potential clients of counseling are ignorant of professional services and reluctant to utilize the existing professional agencies. A survey shows that the reasons for not seeking help by Korean immigrants are cited: "Solve by self or with family," "Do not want others to know about their problem," "Don't know where to go," "Organization can't help," etc.²³ It seems that mental health and family counseling are the service areas which need more study and attention.

7. Another anxiety most Korean immigrants have, consciously or unconsciously, derives from identity crisis. This issue will become more serious as the second and third generation Korean-Americans grow up, because Korean-Americans will remain socially marginal as long as their physical appearance remains different from that of the majority.²⁴ For the first generation the major issue is survival and stability with material success. They can identify their own culture by using their mother tongue, eating Korean food, and holding onto their Korean values and customs. But, for the second and third generations, their issue is a sense of belonging in this

²³Bok-Lim C. Kim, Asian Americans, p. 204

²⁴Yu, "Koreans in America," p. 92; Chan-Hie Kim, p. 49.

society - social survival. The younger generation, trying to belong, faces the reality that they do not belong in spite of speaking English and working and living in a racially-integrated community.²⁵ Because of the confusion surrounding their identity for Korean youngsters, a common experience has been to either ignore or reject Korean culture and values. But this tendency may lead to further confusion and identity crisis.

8. Compared with Chinese and Japanese immigrants, Korean immigrants have been known as "churchgoers!" A study reveals that Korean immigrants' religious involvement is greater than that of any other Asian group except the Filipinos.²⁶ Among the Korean congregation the writer serves, 75 percent of the active members did not go to church in Korea. It is a general phenomenon that church participation of the Korean immigrants significantly increases after their arrival in the United States. The uniquely non-assimilating character of Korean immigrants seems to be a key factor for the growth of Korean churches in the United States. Another reason for the booming of Korean churches in this country is that Korean churches provide not only worship opportunity in the Korean language, but provide, also, a sense of belonging,

²⁵Philip Kyung Sik Park, "Korean Identity in North America," in Chun, p. 23.

²⁶Bok-Lim C. Kim, Asian Americans, p. 178.

informal social services such as job finding, providing transportation, general orientation, etc. The Korean church in the United States is not only a religious institution but also a center for the Korean community.

HISTORY OF KOREAN CHURCH IN THE U. S.²⁷

Among the first large group of Korean immigrants who arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1903, a significant number were already converted to Christianity, even prior to their landing in Hawaii. As early as 1784, Christianity came to Korea in the form of Catholicism, when Sung-hun Yi, the son of an ambassador to China, returned to Korea with Christian books, crosses and other Christian artifacts. When many Koreans turned to Catholicism, the Yi court banned Christianity because its doctrine was considered dangerous to the society which was founded on the Confucian system of loyalties and ancestor worship. After the ban, many Korean Christians and Chinese and French missionaries were executed. The treaty of 1882 between Korea and the United States brought western missionaries to Korea. In 1884, Dr. Horace Allen, a medical missionary, arrived in Korea. The following year, Reverend and Mrs. Henry G. Appenzeller, Methodists, and Reverend Horace

²⁷This summary is based on Hyung-Chan Kim, "The History and Role of the Church in the Korean American Community," in Roy I. Sano (ed.) The Theologies of Asian Americans and Pacific People (Berkeley: Asian Center for Theology and Strategies, 1976) pp. 55-66.

Underwood, a Presbyterian, arrived in Korea.²⁸ Koreans responded to the Christian gospel, which had a strong emphasis on human equality, and opened before them a new world. American missionaries influenced directly or indirectly Koreans to emigrate to the Hawaiian Islands, where an opportunity for Koreans to improve their conditions, to acquire useful knowledge and to better themselves financially, was waiting. Therefore, the history of the Korean church in this country may be considered as a continuing saga of Korean Christianity.

The history of the Korean church in the United States may be divided into four major periods.²⁹

1. The Period of Beginning and Growth, 1903 - 1918.

This period saw a rapid growth in the number of Korean converts. Approximately 2,800 Koreans were converted and 39 Korean churches were established in the Hawaiian Islands, where there were less than 8,000 Koreans. The first Korean church in Honolulu was established by the Methodists. The second Methodist church was organized in San Francisco in 1905. The first Presbyterian-Korean church was organized in Los Angeles, and its full church status was received in 1921.

2. The Period of Conflicts and Divisions, 1919 - 1945.

The second period was marked with disputes over policy on

²⁸Allen D. Clark, A History of the Church in Korea (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1971) pp. 76-91

²⁹Hyung-Chan Kim.

church administration, church financial business and politics. One example was the dispute between the Hawaiian Methodist Mission and the Korean Methodists, which led to separation of a group of 70 or 80 people from the Methodist Church in order to follow Syngman Rhee's leadership for the autonomy and self-determination of the church in the Korean community. Rhee wanted to use the church and a Korean boarding school to teach Korean nationalism and train Korean political leaders against the Japanese control of Korea. Later Rhee became the first president of the Republic of Korea. From the beginning of the separatist movement to August, 1945, when Korea was freed from Japanese colonialism, the members of Korean churches were an indispensable part of the Korean national independence movement within and outside the country.

Internal dissensions and divisions within Korean churches during this period occurred not only in Hawaii but in other areas in this country. But many Korean churches were established in metropolitan areas on the mainland by increasing needs for Korean immigrants.

3. The Period of Status Quo, 1946 - 1967. The third period was characterized by efforts on the part of the first generation to maintain the status quo, and by an attitude of indifference and rebellion on the part of the second and third generations. The first generation as a whole had a political cause to right and to live for through their lives. The church was a place of social interaction and cultural

identification, but less so for later generations. The later generation showed a complete lack of interest in the matter of politics. Another reason which slowed down the growth of the Korean church during this period was the oriental Exclusion Law and the quota system of immigration. This law prevented new immigration and thus the vitality and spiritual leadership among Korean churches.

4. The Period of Revival, 1968 - Present. This period began with the new influx of Korean immigrants into the United States. With the constant increase in the Korean population the number of Korean churches has increased by leaps and bounds. In the Seattle-Tacoma area, with approximately 15,000 Koreans, there are more than 30 Korean churches. None of them existed before 1968. The ratio between the number of Korean people and the number of Korean churches is 500 to 1, which complies with the nationwide ratio.³⁰ This new wave of Korean immigrants promises new resources and leadership which are needed in the Korean churches. However, it also shows some potential problems for the Korean immigrant church.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KOREAN IMMIGRANT CHURCH

The writer is going to review some positive and negative characteristics of the Korean Church in the United States from his personal experiences and observations.

³⁰Statement by Myong Gul Son, a staff member, National Division, Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church.

Positive Aspects

1. Korean immigrant churches provide an "entry port", particularly for new immigrants. It is a well-known fact that Korean churches are a place where new immigrants can meet their own people and share their frustration and problems with others in the same boat. All Korean churches use the Korean language exclusively for their worship services. This gives them a sense of belonging and cohesiveness, making them think: "I am not alone in this American desert." New immigrants get psychological comfort by mingling with Korean people in the church. New immigrants are encouraged to attend a cluster Bible study group, which is held in different homes in a very informal, friendly setting, sometimes sharing food after the meeting. Also, the Korean church is a place where information regarding job and daily-life orientation is exchanged.

2. The most important function of Korean churches in the United States is their weekly worship services. Almost every Korean church holds two or three services a week: Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening, conducted in the Korean language exclusively. Some churches hold an early morning prayer meeting, a vigil once a week, and revival meetings quarterly or twice a year. Through worship services, Bible study and prayer meetings, Korean Christians find peace of mind and strength with which they can endure weary life under tremendous stress.

3. Most Korean churches also provide or at least try to provide an English class or a Korean class. Learning English is a survival matter for new immigrants. On the other hand, Korean parents want their children to learn or keep their mother tongue. The writer learned that some Korean parents send their children to church and the Korean class in the church even though they do not attend church. Some Korean churches now try Korean and English bilingual education programs for the younger generation. But the problem is finding bilingual teachers who can be fluent both in Korean and English.

4. Another important role of Korean churches in the United States is that of the Korean community center. We see many Korean churches functioning as a social center for the whole Korean community with programs for senior citizens, counseling by pastors, workshops and seminars on parent/children relationships, lectures on income tax and small businesses, etc. All the Korean holidays are observed and incorporated in the church calendar as a part of the effort to maintain their ethnic identity. The Korean church is not only a place for worship but a miniature of the Korean community in the United States.

Negative Aspects

1. Because of so strong ethnicity in their religious practice, such as exclusive use of the Korean language, authoritative church structure, nationalistic spirit, and so on, some Korean immigrant churches are direct transplants of the Korean

church from Korea. Although the Korean churches provide the meaning of life, deep fellowship and sense of belonging for Korean immigrants, they give good reasons for the uprooted Korean immigrants to retreat into a religious ghetto. This slows the process of transformation into a new identity as Korean-American.

2. The mobility of church members in Korean immigrant churches is another problem which makes the church unstable. It is a general phenomenon that church members move around different churches without any membership commitment to a certain church or denomination. In many cases new people get on the church membership roll without going through any membership training or receiving procedure. It is criticized, even by lay persons, that leadership positions in the church, such as lay deacon and elder, are overissued to the people who are not trained or equipped. Sometimes this office is misused to keep the members active in the church.

3. Another concern is the quality of leadership. Under authoritarian leadership of clergy, honest communication does not occur, and the congregation tends to withhold themselves from whole-hearted participation. "Korean congregations are not necessarily satisfied with clergy and demonstrate authoritarian leadership."³¹ Besides the authoritarian

³¹Steve Sangkwon Shim, "An Analytical Study of Recent Korean Immigrant Churches in Southern California: A Psycho-Religious Approach to the Basic Needs of the Korean Congregations" (D. Min. project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1975) p. 110.

style of clergy, leadership structure in the local Korean immigrant church, dominated by male and lay elders, should be reconsidered.

4. Often Korean church leaders in the United States bring on public criticism due to the unethical motive in the process of starting new churches. Many Korean churches are branched out, as the result of internal conflicts, rather than as an effort in outreach evangelism to Korean immigrants. Without any denominational system, which can be acted upon as intermediary, pastors, who have to retreat from the churches they have served, start new mission churches with their followers nearby. Almost every Korean church in the United States goes through several turmoils of division until it is stabilized. This division makes the Korean churches remain small-size in many cases. On the other hand, some Korean pastors, who have entered this country on visitors' status, organize new churches with a group of a few people, hoping that they may be issued permanent status to stay in this country. This often becomes an object of public concern.

Chapter V

THE FERN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AT THE CROSSROAD

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE

A Brief History

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church had its beginnings previous to 1880 by way of religious meetings held in private homes of the community. There were no records to tell us just when the first religious meeting was held, but it is known that the people met in one another's homes for the purpose of worship. It is recorded:

These meetings were often held in the family kitchen, as most of the houses in those days had no livingroom. For that reason the gatherings were called kitchen meetings, and the cook stove served to furnish heat for the participants.¹

From these meetings there emerged the Fern Hill² Sunday School, organized in 1880 and meeting in Byrd School House, which was built in the same year. There is an interesting episode about the motive for building Byrd School House at Fern Hill.

Early in 1880 it was determined to build a school in the Fern Hill area. This was by no means a new idea; it had been talked of before, but without definite action.

¹Leland J. Athow, History of Fern Hill Methodist Church (Tacoma: Fern Hill United Methodist Church, 1964) p. 4.

²The name "Fern Hill" was confined at first to the Sunday School, and it was not until later that it was applied to the community. The area was platted in 1888 by George W. Byrd with the name Fern Hill on record. Ibid.

However, Clara and Addie Byrd, daughters of George W. Byrd,³ one day while on the way to school, which was three and one-half miles away from their house, were badly frightened by the appearance of a cougar. This unhappy incident served to spur action, because the girls were too terrified to make the trip to school thereafter. Mr. Byrd donated one acre of land, much of the lumber, and furnished labor to help with the construction.⁴

In 1882 the people organized as a Methodist Episcopal Church, and the services were held in Byrd School House until a church building was erected and dedicated on June 30, 1889. The building was located two blocks west of the present church building. It was described in the invitation letter to the dedication service as "in good style, a handsome church of modern design, which the ladies have furnished within."⁵ During the year of 1901 average Sunday School attendance was reported as 110.

In 1908, in order to get away from the noise of street cars, the church building was moved to 8441 S. G Street. Soon, thereafter, a one-story frame building was purchased and moved to the location to be used as a parish house and Social Hall. The two buildings remain at that location to this day, used now by another denomination.

When the church's 75th anniversary was celebrated in 1955 the church was the oldest Methodist Building in the Northwest to have been in constant use. As of the end of 1963 a total membership of 357 and an average Sunday School

³George W. Byrd was one of the charter members of the church.

⁴Athow, p. 2. ⁵Ibid., p. 10.

attendance of 145 was reported.

The present frame structure of the sanctuary, fellowship hall and classrooms was built in 1964 - 1965 on South 84th Street and Tacoma Avenue, just one and one-half blocks northeast of the old building. The building was consecrated in 1965 and dedicated on June 7, 1981 by Bishop Melvin Talbert. The Fern Hill United Methodist Church celebrated its centennial anniversary in May, 1982. Up to now 42 pastors have served this church for the first century.

Membership Trends

As shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3, the church membership and worship and Sunday School attendance had increased steadily right before and after the present church building was built. The membership increased to 357 in 1963 from 199 in 1953 and Sunday School attendance to 145 in 1963 from 111 in 1953. But membership started dropping from 1970 and worship attendance from 1969. By 1982 the membership had declined to 213 from a one-time high of 529 in 1969 (Figure 1); the average worship attendance to 70 from 231 in 1968 (Figure 2); the average Sunday School to 33 from 143 in 1969 (Figure 3). The average age of the members is well past 60. Financially it is surviving, unable to pay its full apportionments. Only five members, including the pastor, are fully employed. Only three families have younger children and three families, teenagers. If the present trends continue, the future of this church is not bright at all (Figure 4).

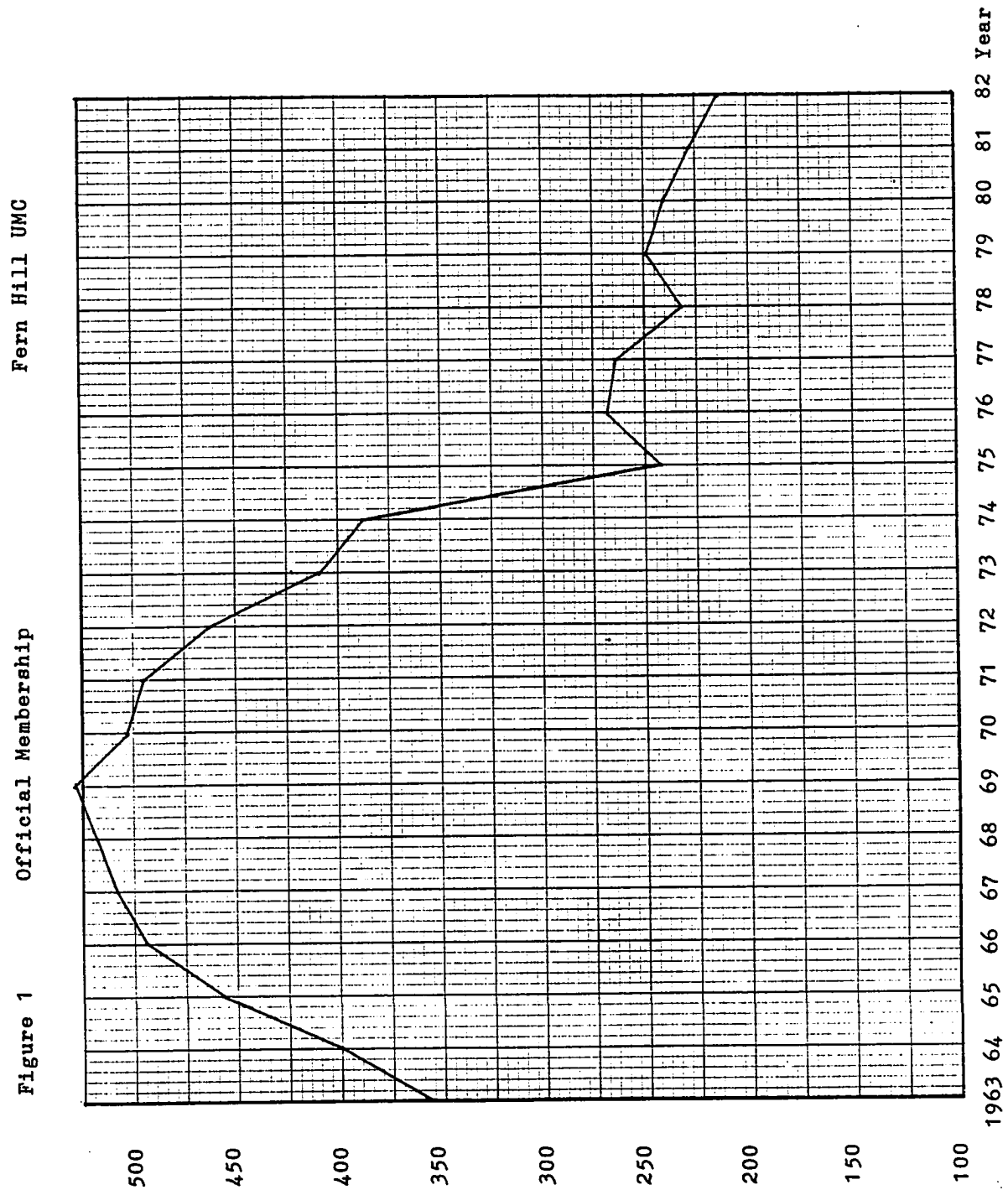


Figure 2 Average Worship Attendance Fern Hill UMC

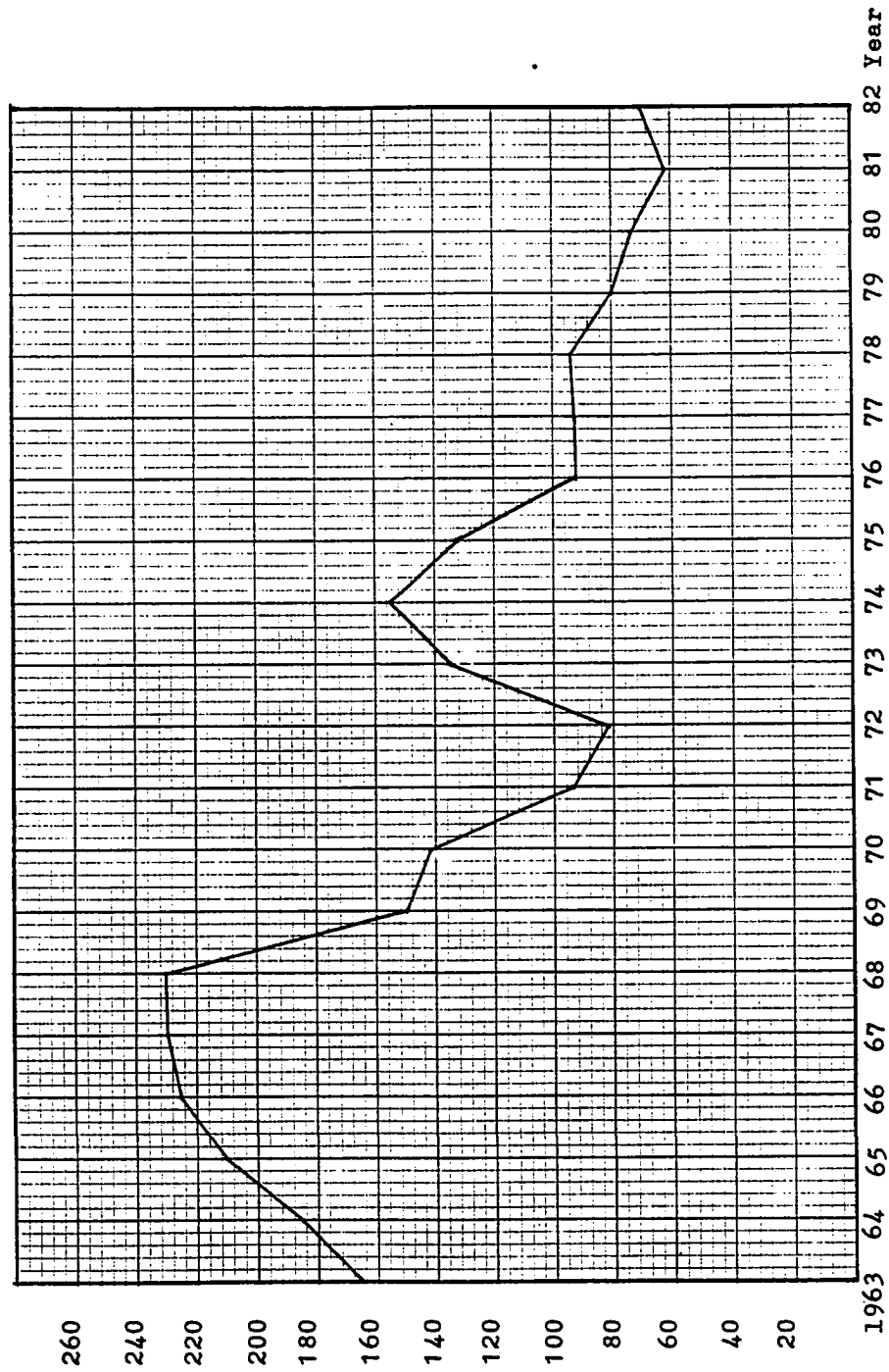


Figure 3 Average Church School Attendance Fern Hill UMC

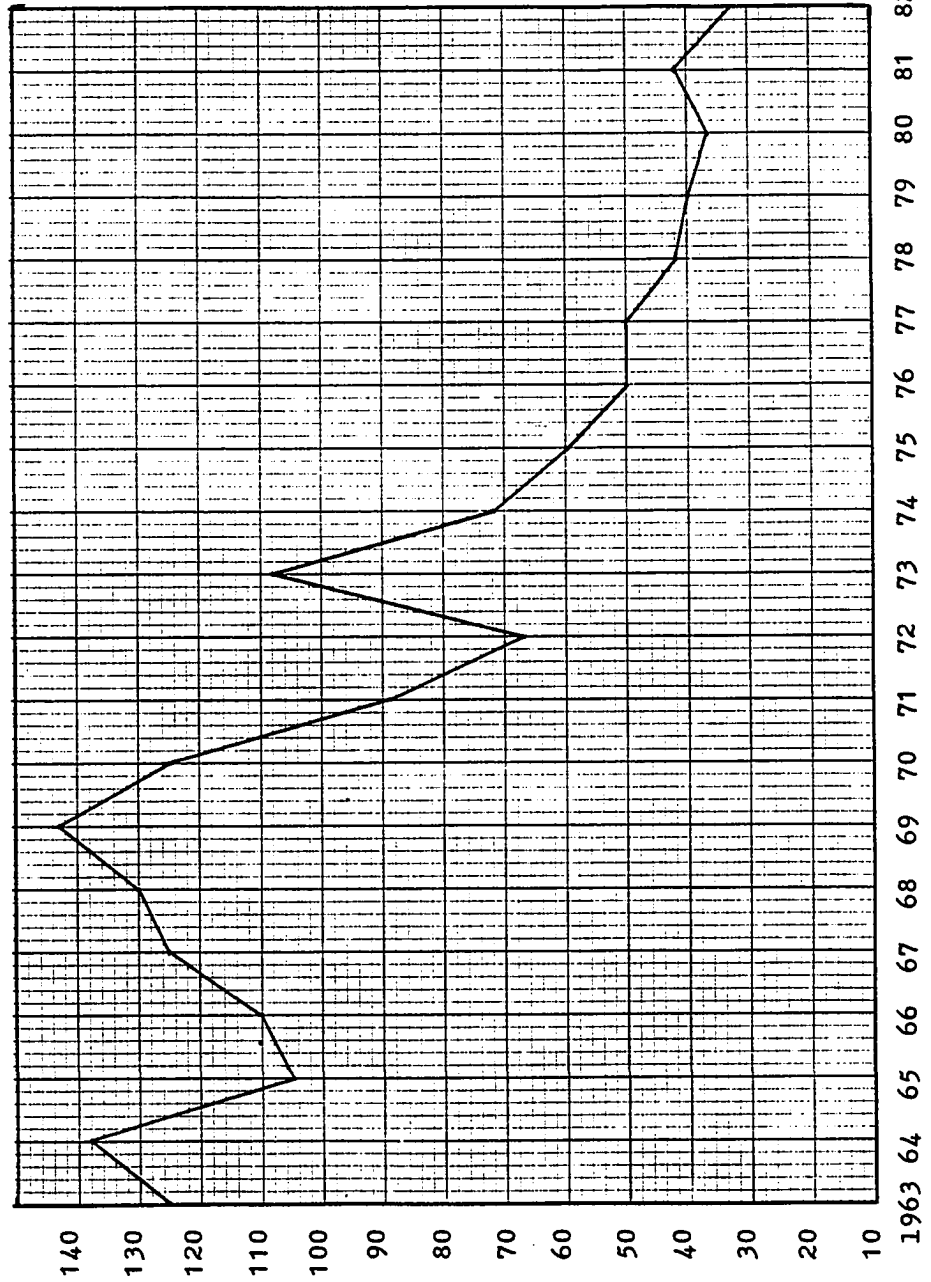
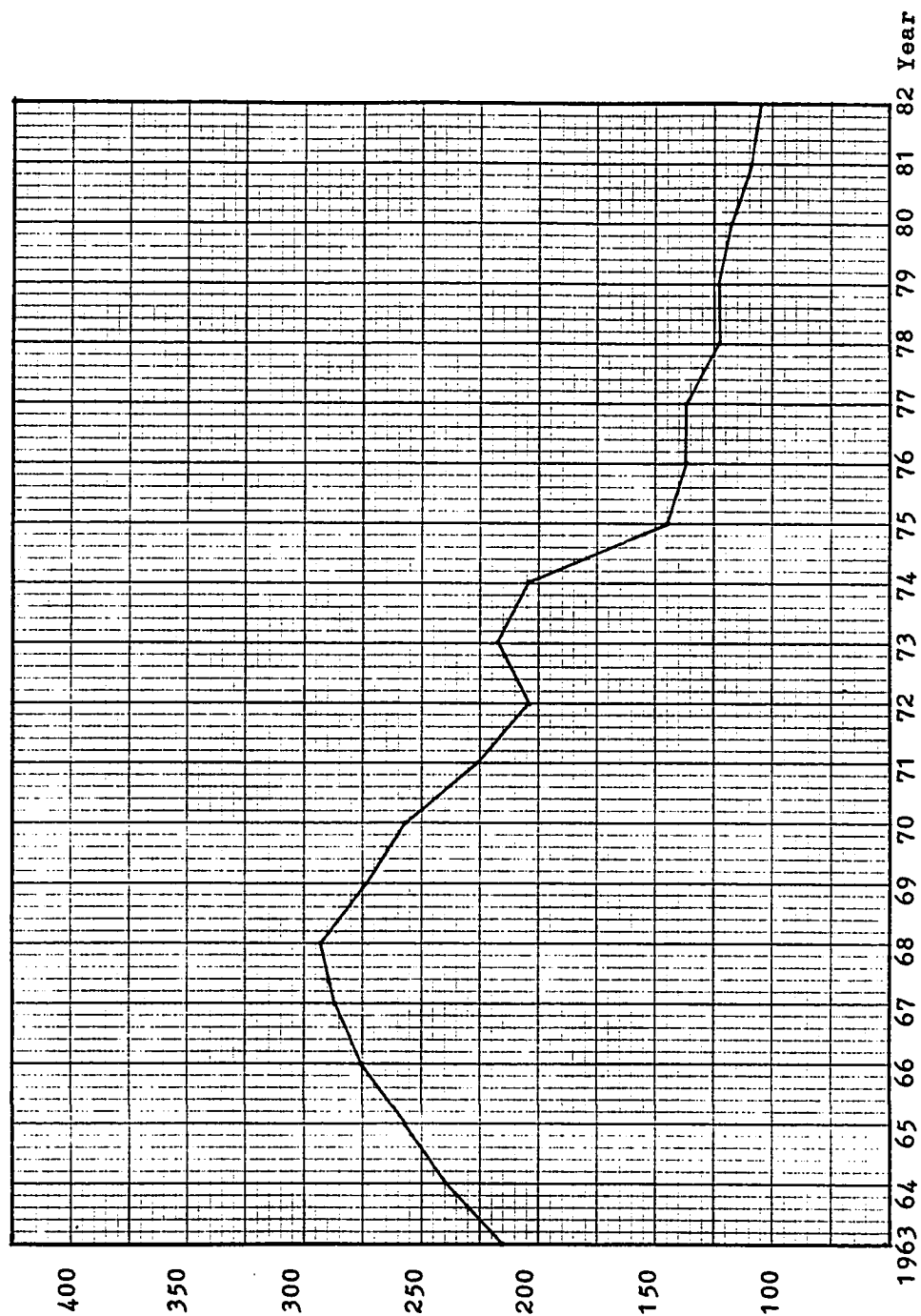


Figure 4 Approximate Membership Strength Fern Hill UMC



Type of the Church

Even though the Fern Hill United Methodist Church is located within the City of Tacoma, it may be defined as a neighborhood church. As mentioned earlier in its historical sketch, the church bears the same name as the neighborhood, "Fern Hill," and has existed for the past hundred years amidst the neighborhood. Almost all of its members live in the neighborhood. A number of the members have lived in the same houses for 30 to 50 years, and have been members of the church long enough to be living memories. Their children and grandchildren all attended Sunday School there and married in that church. Those members who do not live in the neighborhood continue to maintain membership with that church.

Changing Community

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is in an outer suburb toward the south edge of the City of Tacoma. The neighborhood is fairly stable, surrounded by old residentials. But in the last few years it has begun to change. An increasing number of Korean immigrant families have moved into this area. According to the 1980 census the immediate neighborhood of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church shows the highest concentration of Korean population in the City of Tacoma (Table 1 and Figure 5) - 42.1 percent of the Korean populatin of the city.

Also, because of the proximity to McChord Air Force Base and the Fort Lewis Army Base, there are many interracially

Table I

Distribution of Korean Population⁶
in the Neighborhood of the Fern Hill UMC

Census Tract	No. of Koreans	% Based on 1348
0631	100	7.4
0632	18	1.3
0633	48	3.5
0634	106	7.8
0635	298	22.1
Sub-total	570	42.1

married families in the neighborhood of the church. They are mostly U.S. servicemen who married Koreans while stationed in Korea. It is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Korean women who have immigrated to the United States as spouses of U.S. military personnel through military installations in Tacoma, Washington.⁷

The enrollment of Korean students in the neighborhood schools shows the heavy concentration of the Korean ethnic group in Fern Hill area (See Table 2).

⁶1980 Census Information, Pierce County, Table 12: Race, p. 2. This census reports 1,348 Korean population in City of Tacoma, but it seems a very low figure.

⁷Daniel Booduck Lee, "Military Transcultural Marriage: A Study of Marital Adjustment Between American Husbands and Korean-Born Spouses" (S.W.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1980) p. 51.

Figure 5

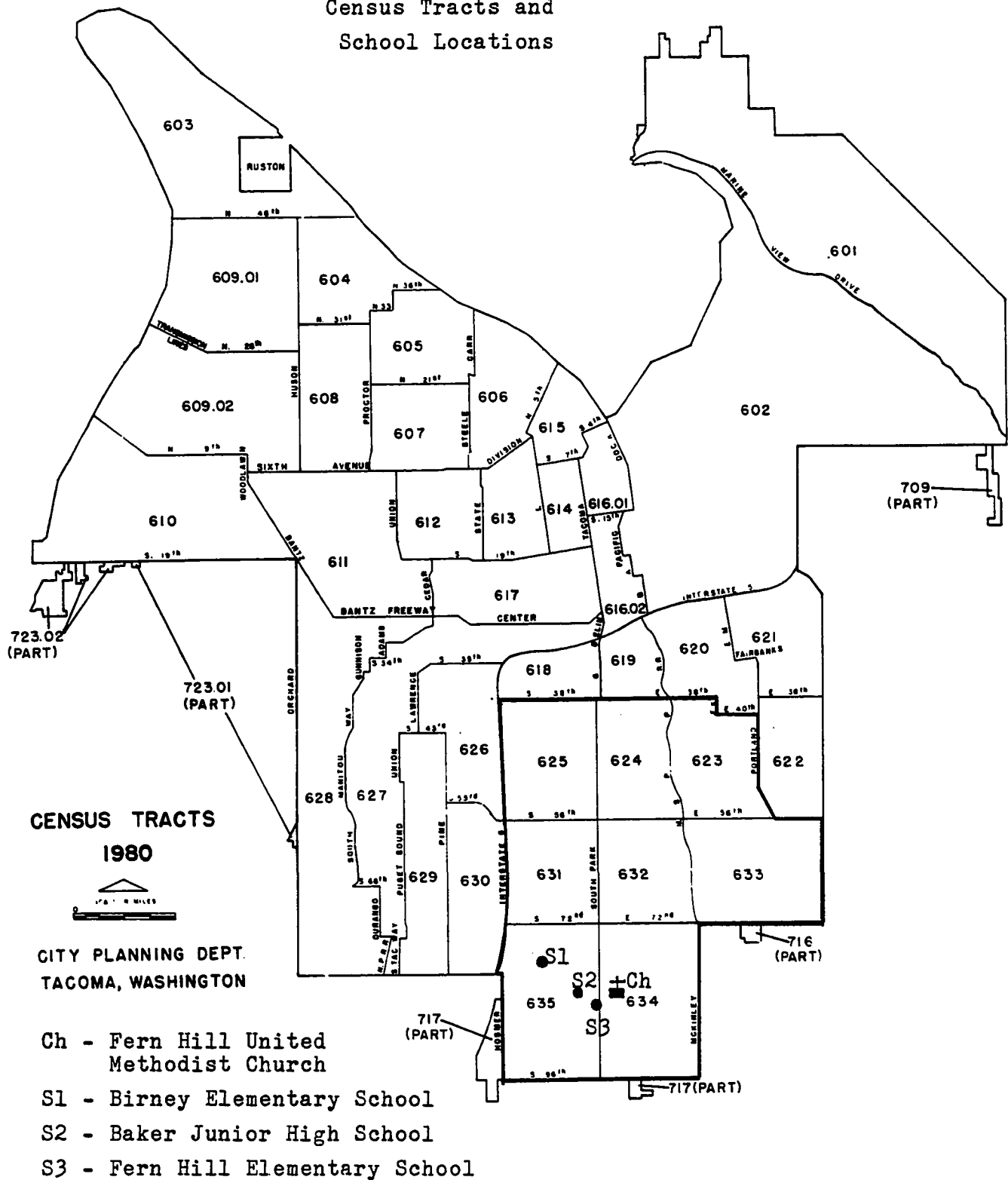
Census Tracts and
School Locations

Table 2

Enrollment of Korean-American Students⁸
in Neighborhood Schools

School	Total Enrollment	No. Koreans	%
Fern Hill Elementary	570	80	14.0
Birney Elementary	411	60	14.6
Baker Junior High	720	55	4.9

CROSS-CULTURAL APPOINTMENT

The United Methodist Church is a racially inclusive denomination. One of the evidences is its open itineracy of ordained clergy. The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church spells out its appointment policy:

Appointments are to be made with consideration of gifts, graces of those appointed, to the needs, characteristics, and opportunities of congregations and institutions, and to program and missional strategy of conferences and without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex or color, consistent with the commitment to an open itineracy.⁹

⁸These are unofficial numbers collected from the Korean-American bilingual teachers in those schools. Fern Hill Elementary School is 2 blocks from the Fern Hill UMC; Birney Elementary, 8 blocks; Baker Junior High, 4 blocks.

⁹Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1980) Paragraph 527, p. 252.

The ethnic minority presence and leadership in The United Methodist Church represents a very promising avenue towards an inclusive Church.

As shown in Table 3, 83 (27%) out of 309 Asian and Pacific Island American ministers in The United Methodist Church are serving predominantly white congregations. Twenty-three out of 139 Korean-American ministers (15%) are also serving predominantly white United Methodist Churches.

Table 3

Asian-American Pastors Serving Predominantly White
United Methodist Churches¹⁰

Asian-American Pastors	No. of Pastors	No. of Pastors with White Church	%
Korean	139	23	15
Chinese	51	19	37
Indian-Pakistani	16	13	81
Japanese	57	11	19
Filipino	29	16	55
Samoan	10	1	10
Tongan	6	0	0
Vietnamese	1	0	0
Total	309	83	27

¹⁰Based on 1982 Directory of Asian American Methodist Ministers and Churches" (Claremont: Center for Asian-American Ministries, School of Theology at Claremont). Following categories are included: Elder, Associate Member, Local Pastor, Probation and Deacon, Retired Ministers with Parish and Multi-racial Churches.

There can be several types of appointments in terms of ethnicity (See Table 4):

1. White pastor with white congregation
2. White pastor with ethnic congregation
3. Ethnic pastor with white congregation
4. Ethnic pastor with ethnic congregation

Table 4

Typology of Cross-Cultural Appointment

		<u>Congregation</u>	
		White	Ethnic
<u>Pastor</u>	White	1	2
	Ethnic	3	4

The case of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church is type 3 - a Korean-American pastor with predominantly white congregation. The present pastor (the writer) is the first ethnic pastor assigned to this congregation for the last two years.

MISSIONAL CHALLENGE

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is at the

crossroad, where western and eastern cultures meet together. The neighborhood is a mixture of elderly white residents, new Korean immigrants and inter-cultural marriages between Caucasian husbands and Korean wives. The present pastor is a Korean-American who was born, educated and ordained in Korea with advanced education in the United States. The cultural diversity in the community, as well as in that church, calls for an appropriate adaptive response on the part of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church.

Can this church, with a predominantly white congregation, isolate itself from this pluralistic community? Will this church close its doors on the ethnic immigrants who have chosen that community as a foundation for their new life in their adopted country, or just be passive in this change with great suspicion and horror? Will this church be ready to reorient its missional priority to meet the needs of the community? What does it mean theologically by cross-cultural acceptance? Does it mean transforming the ethnic minorities into the image of the white majority? Is a racially integrated congregation the most ideal model this church should seek? How can this church resolve the tension between the ideology and the reality of a multi-racial congregation?

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is struggling with these questions and challenges. The writer believes that the future life of this church will greatly depend on its response to this new challenge.

Chapter VI

KOREAN MINISTRY AT THE FERN HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

AN INTEGRATED CONGREGATION: IDEAL BUT NOT REALISTIC

There was no single Korean-American at the Fern Hill United Methodist Church when the writer was appointed to the church as its pastor as of July 1, 1981. Several months after the writer assumed the pastorate, he and his family began to attract their native people, Korean-Americans, into the church without any intentional efforts.

In October, 1981, a first Korean couple came to church, Mr. Hwa Young Ham, a lay elder from Chung Dong Methodist Church, Seoul, Korea, and his wife, a deaconess from the same church. Through this couple, several Korean wives of American military servicemen started coming to the worship services exclusively conducted in English. Some Korean wives brought their husbands and children to church and Sunday School. Within three months the average worship attendance on Sunday morning increased from 60 to 90, and Sunday School attendance almost tripled with these new people.

These Korean-Americans and their families were well accepted by the Caucasian members for the following reasons:

1. For the past few years, this church has lost a great portion of its members, particularly some active

families with children for various reasons: disputes over the pastors who were not able to function fully due to their health problems; dissatisfaction with The United Methodist Church's so-called "liberal stands" on various social and religious issues; disagreements among the church leaders on having a Korean-Presbyterian Church which was using the church facilities, and disappointments in a Sunday School barely existing. Many families, who were members of the church for a long time, joined other United Methodist Churches with strong Sunday School programs, Assembly of God and Peoples churches, both pentecostal. Suddenly, with these new Korean-Americans and their families, the constituency of the church began to change, bringing new breeze to the life of the church.

2. The Korean wives felt very proud to attend a Caucasian church whose pastor is a Korean-American. Most of their American husbands did not go to church when these Korean wives attended other Korean churches. But, here at Fern Hill United Methodist Church, Korean wives and American husbands all seemed happy. Some Korean wives made comments: "I am thrilled to listen to a Korean pastor preaching in English, although I hardly understand his sermon." Some Caucasian husbands commented: "This is an ideal church for my family. My wife likes this church, and so do I."

But soon it began to surface that the Korean people do not get much out of the English service due to their English inefficiency. They could not sing hymns

along with the Caucasian congregation, could not understand the English sermon and could not catch what was going on.

Upon their request, a weekly Korean Bible Study Group (named "Holy Club") was formed and had its first meeting on January 7th, 1982. The Bible Study was led by Mr. Ham, using the Korean language. The Pastor gave special lectures once a month on The United Methodist Church and its beliefs. This group meeting provided opportunities for exposure to the Bible and also the formation of a supportive group within the Korean community.

Taking this new development as an enormous evangelistic opportunity for the Korean-American neighbors, the Administrative Council and Evangelism Committee of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church made special efforts to welcome and assimilate them into the total body of the church. The pastor and the congregation thought that forming a racially integrated congregation was an ideal goal for this church. It was also thought that this was the most Christian way - no West nor East in Jesus Christ. But the reality was different. Some Korean-Americans started drifting away in spite of the efforts made by the Caucasian congregation. The idea of establishing a racially integrated congregation seemed ideal but not realistic.

The lessons the writer and the congregation both learned in this experimental stage can be summarized as follows:

1. Worship as Total Involvement of Participants. The Korean members expressed their concerns about their slow spiritual growth. Some Koreans frankly said that the English worship services were boring, that their spiritual needs were not met in this church, that they were afraid of losing their faith if they continued the meaningless routine of worship service without personal involvement. Occasionally the pastor conducted bilingual services by reading the scriptures from a Korean Bible and speaking Korean to Korean members during Holy Communion, but it seemed to have appeal to them only for a while. With language barriers there could not be a total involvement in worship service.

2. Lack of Leadership Exercise. Another serious problem the Korean members began to face in the midst of a predominantly white congregation was no opportunity for them to exercise and develop their leadership in the church. The Evangelism Committee invited a Korean member as a representative of the Korean group, but experiencing some frustration due to a communication problem he withdrew himself from the committee. The ultimate purpose of Evangelism is making disciples of the Christ. However, without full involvement in the community of faith, without a chance of serving others with one's gifts, personal faith does not grow. Being a spectator, any Christian servanthood-leadership cannot be developed.

3. No instant Intimacy. The Evangelism Committee

tried to find some way to mix the Caucasian and Korean groups together during the coffee hour after church or whole church potluck dinner, but the Korean people always gathered around with their own group at the corner. The physical spaces represent psychological barriers which should be overcome.

Urban T. Holmes III elaborates this:

Intimacy is not just the coming together of persons in joy, happiness, and good feelings about one another. It is the dissolution between persons of ego boundaries or persona, Carl Jung's name for the mask we have been conditioned to hold between us and the world..... intimacy is willingness to let the other enter into that chaos that is ours.¹

We cannot expect instant intimacy between the two groups with different cultural backgrounds. There are many steps to take in the process of moving from passivity to interaction. The process should be "knowledge - feeling - interactivity." Knowledge (cognitia) involves information, analysis and insight. Feeling (affection) involves perception, appreciation and identification. Interactivity (experience) involves awareness, attending and interacting.²

4. Getting Stories Together. No one comes to the experience of God in a vacuum. Each one has his or her own story which is a product of the most intimate community. The experience of God cannot be detached from the personal

¹Urban T. Holmes III, Ministry and Imagination (New York: Seabury Press, 1976) p. 205.

²From a material handed out by William Shinto in his class, "Prolegomena to an Asian-American Theology," School of Theology at Claremont, 1979.

and cultural story which preserves the memory of past events in a way that those events still have power for the present and future.³ When the personal and cultural story meets with God's story, one's life finds meaning and power which gives him the courage to move into the unknown future.

The writer began to feel that the exactly same sermon delivered was perceived differently by the Caucasian people and Korean-American people who have different personal and cultural experiences. This is not just a matter of understanding but a matter of translating of Jesus' story into the culture of the audience. Without a proper communication, there is no link established between "my story," "culture's story," and "God's story."

A basic difference of the Korean-American's story from that of Americans is that the Korean-American's story is a pilgrim's story, while the American's story is that of "status quo."

As Christians, we live out the one story - the story of Jesus Christ, but in our own stories.

The Latin American's story points to liberation theology; the black's story points to the God of the oppressed; the Asian-American's story points to the God of justice in their pilgrimage. But, as Holmes emphasizes, "It is the task of ministry to enable us to get our stories together!"⁴

³Holmes, p. 169.

⁴Ibid., p. 186.

The writer believes that this can be possible in an inclusive church which allows diversity to gather the different stories together and reflect them on the story of Jesus Christ - the only one story in salvation.

AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH

There are several models of ministry for an inclusive church. Hae-Jong Kim introduced various models of bilingual ministry:⁵

1. Partial model - Bilingual for a part of the worship service.
2. Dual model - Totally bilingual for worship service and other activities.
3. Separate Program Model - Sub-groups according to ages and language capabilities.
4. Separate Worship Model - Two services (i.e., English Service and Korean Language Service).
5. Separate Organizational Model - Separate organizations by English-speaking congregation and Korean-speaking congregation, but still one charge.
6. Separate Church Model - Two separate churches using one church building.
7. Integrated Model - Total assimilation into American Church.

It was Model 7, Integrated Church, the Fern Hill United Methodist Church pursued. But the writer, as well as other Caucasian and Korean members, came to the conclusion that

⁵Hae-Jong Kim, "Bilingual Ministry and Its Task," presented at a workshop, National Federation of Korean United Methodist Church held in Los Angeles, May 11-13, 1982. United Methodist News (July, 1982), p. 3.

the time is not ripe for a totally integrated congregation with the Caucasian members and Korean-American newcomers. Rather, Model 4 - Separate Worship - and Model 5 - separate organization - seemed suited to the present situation of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church.

Korean Language Worship Service

With the consent of the Administrative Council, the first Korean-speaking worship service was held on July 18, 1982, with ten families, on the premise that:

1. The purpose of the Korean Worship Service is to provide a language service for the Korean wives who do not have English ability.

2. Although the Korean wives and their Caucasian husbands attend different language worship services, they belong to the same church. The sense of oneness can be built by having joint programs and services on special occasions such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and World Communion Day, etc.

3. By using the same sermon for both services, in Korean and English, some Korean wives who stay for the English service with their Caucasian spouses may have a better understanding of the English sermon.

4. The Korean Ministry at Fern Hill is a part of the outreach evangelism this church can provide for the Korean population in the community. The Korean language

service may draw more new Korean wives, along with their Caucasian husbands, into this church. Also, it may reach out to the unchurched Korean families in the community in which Korean-American population is heavily concentrated.

5. Since the pastor is a Korean-born American and capable of bilingual communication, he can preach for both services. Furthermore, since both groups are under his leadership, there would not be any time conflicts in terms of scheduling between the two groups.⁶

6. The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is not undergoing a transition from a white to Korean congregation. Rather, three groups, white, interracial married families, and Korean families will continue to exist more permanently. This church has to be sensitive to the social realities in this community and include all these three groups in the total ministry of the church.

From the middle of August, 1982, the composition of the attendants to the Korean language service began to change. A highly educated Korean couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ki-ho Nam came in and brought along with them several Korean families

⁶Until the end of April, 1981, immediately prior to this writer's arrival, there was a Korean United Presbyterian congregation using the facilities of this church. The two groups could not get along well because of communication breakdowns which caused some conflict and misunderstanding in scheduling. Finally the Administrative Board told the Korean congregation to leave. The writer senses that the Caucasian congregation still has some hard feelings toward the previous Korean group and some anxiety that the same thing may again occur.

who had been disenchanted by some other Korean churches for some reasons. There was a small tension between the Korean wives of the military servicemen and the new influx, but through mutual understanding and intentional efforts by both groups a good rapport was established.

There have been some anxieties expressed by the Caucasian members: "I am afraid of being too close to the Korean children running around. One of these days they will knock me down." "Pastor has been spending too much time for the Korean group since the Korean service started." "Isn't the Korean group going to take over our church?"

On the other hand, some concerns were expressed by the Korean group: "The 9:30 worship time is too early for us." "It is always embarrassing to pass through the American people who are standing in the narthex waiting for the Korean service to be over." "Our pastor doesn't spend enough time with us and for us."

But despite all these concerns and anxieties the Korean ministry has grown steadily.

Sunday School in English

Recruiting bilingual Sunday School teachers is a big problem for almost every Korean immigrant church in the United States, because most Korean adults who could teach Sunday School are first-generation immigrants and their English is not good enough to teach the Korean children who speak only English or

whose English is much better than the Korean language.

Since the Sunday School hour is the same time as the Korean language service hour, all the Korean children are put in the existing Sunday School, taught exclusively by Caucasian teachers, using English as the medium of communication. Now the number of Korean children exceeds the number of Caucasian children. The racially integrated Sunday School seems well accepted by the children because there is no communication problem among them, and also they are accustomed to such a setting in their school environments.

But the writer believes that leaving whole Christian education for the Korean immigrants and their children to the Caucasian teachers is not advisable. There should be some contributions by the Korean group or by Caucasian teachers who have knowledge of the language and culture of the majority students, because Christian education is not just a transmission of Biblical knowledge, but a process of becoming, which involves interaction between personal/cultural history and God's story.

Learning Center

To teach English as a second language to the foreign-born people, the Fern Hill United Methodist Church set up a Learning Center, with the cooperation of the Tacoma Area Literacy Council. Seven members from the Caucasian congregation received special training to handle the entire program.

The English class uses the Frank Laubach method -

teaching and learning on a one-to-one basis. Two of the teachers were former elementary teachers, but no one has taught English as a secondary language before.

The English class not only provides an opportunity to teach and learn English, but also to function as a bridge between the Caucasian and Korean-American members in the church. Through their personal contacts, mutual understanding, appreciation of being different, trust and a sense of oneness in Christ is built, which is a very fundamental basis for multi-racial interaction.

Besides English teaching, a learning opportunity is provided for some adult Korean women who cannot read and write Korean letters. The Learning Center can be extended in the future to citizenship class, cooking, sewing, handicraft, cultural orientation programs, etc.

With the human resources from both groups, this Learning Center can be an excellent field in which different cultures can be exchanged and mutual understanding can be promoted.

Home Bible Study

The "Holy Club," a Bible Study Group, which was held on Thursday evenings every week in the church, took a new format into a Home Bible Study Group in different homes. Korean people usually respond well to the home study group in an

informal setting, because it is a combination of Bible study and fellowship. Usually it ends with a treat. It is easy for the members to invite friends to the home meeting, get acquainted with each other and become more sensitive to the needs of others.

The size of the cluster groups depends on the size of the congregation, but the ideal size is between ten to twelve persons. Also, it is recommended that the pastor or a knowledgeable lay person lead the study part with full preparation, because the main purpose of the group should be the Bible study. Since a great many of the Korean members are fairly new Christians, with no knowledge of the scriptures, teaching the Bible should be one of the most important areas for the Korean ministry.

Neighborhood Youth Center

The educational, cultural and recreational programs for Korean-American youth seem very important as well as delicate. Sometimes the youth immigrants and second-generation born in this country are confused between two cultures because they are not mature enough to overcome the cultural conflicts. Communication breakdown between the youth and parents, contradiction between the values of their parents and those of their peer group, discrepancy between the expectation of parents and aspirations of the youth and ignorance of the real problems as Asian-Americans, all cause psychological unequilibrium among the Korean-American youth.

The writer has noticed that the Korean-American youth do not seem to be actively engaged in social life with other Caucasian friends and that there is no place for them to go for cultural activities and recreation in Tacoma. The Korean-American youth need a place to meet with other ethnic friends to share their common problems and to be exposed to their inherited culture.

It will be very helpful if a neighborhood church opens up its facilities and provides a Neighborhood Youth Center where they can come in freely after school for various activities. Music programs, such as sing-alongs, or an orchestra, sports ministry through soccer, volleyball, ping pong, baseball teams, under the supervision of youth counselors, could be good recreational programs a local church can provide for the Korean-American youth.

Among the cultural and educational programs, a workshop, such as "Expectations of Parents and Aspirations of Korean-American Youth" and a cultural film on Korea may be included.

Social Services

Bok-Lim Kim's study shows the priorities among the social services considered most important by Korean-Americans. The rank order by types of services needed are as follows:⁷

⁷Bok-Lim C. Kim, The Asian Americans: Changing Patterns, Changing Needs (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, 1978) p. 205.

(1) Legal Aid Service, (2) English Conversation Class, (3) Childcare Center, (4) Bilingual Referral Service, (5) Public Aid, (6) Mental Health Service, (7) Employment Service, (8) Vocational Training.

Kim made a comment that the Korean respondents assigned legal aid services the most important, not because they have actually experienced legal problems, but because they find themselves helpless in the face of the American legal system which appears to them to be somewhat disquieting.⁸ Also it is not easy for Korean businessmen to use the right forms and get them filled out properly. Even though for them legal aspects are frightening, many are not accustomed to hiring lawyers or attorneys.

It is questionable how much a local church can be of assistance in legal matters, but the church can set up a seminar to educate the people on legal aspects by inviting bilingual Korean-American lawyers.

Also, a bilingual referral service can be handled by a local church. An important person for this role may be the pastor or church secretary. The local church should have all the information on the existing social service agencies and should have good working relations with them.

In regard to a Day-Care Center, the main problem is

⁸Ibid., p. 210.

facilities, because most Korean churches in the United States are using American churches. Since many Korean mothers are working, many children are left home, alone, or are sent to friends' houses. For the Korean churches, with their own church buildings, it would be very beneficial for the Korean community to have Day-Care service in the neighborhood church.

Mental Health Services requires professional counselors, but it can be done to some degree by pastoral counseling, because most mental health problems among the Korean-Americans are the result of the great pressure in the society of a different culture and racism. Korean pastors should retain a close relationship with the existing Mental Health agencies in the community, and should be trained to be of help in this special area.

Special Ministry for Interracial Marriages

It is reported that there are about 3000 Korean wives married to American military servicemen in the Tacoma area. On top of the cultural shock and maladjustment to the country, many of them are suffering from marital problems. Tai-Young Lee reports that about 80 percent of Korean wives of American military personnel end up with divorce.⁹ The Korean wives feel that their marriages are a sort of time bomb

⁹Joong-ang Daily News, U.S. Edition (January 27, 1983).

that will eventually explode.

Sil dong Kim summarizes the complaints which may lead to the marital problems for the Korean wives and American husbands who have arrived in the United States recently.¹⁰

The wife complains that:

- (1) She could not communicate with him;
- (2) Her husband does not care about child discipline;
- (3) She does not have mobility;
- (4) He is not willing to help her friends;
- (5) He does not take her out to his friends' gatherings;
- (6) He does not trust her;
- (7) He might be seeing American girl friends;
- (8) He is not interested in her family members;
- (9) He drinks excessively.

The husband complains that:

- (1) He could not communicate with her;
- (2) She is punishing the children too much;
- (3) She is too busy with her friends;
- (4) He does not like his wife's Korean cooking;
- (5) She spends too much money;
- (6) She is not lively;
- (7) She feels rejected because she is not American;
- (8) She thinks more about her own family and friends than about him;
- (9) She is incapable of handling ordinary household matters.

As we review these findings, we find that the Korean wives are living under tremendous stress - culture shock and instability of marriages. The Korean wives in the interracial marriages are in the most marginalized situation, neither belonging to their husbands' culture nor their native culture and people. Many Korean wives in this hostile society build a

¹⁰Sil Dong Kim, "Interracially Married Korean Women Immigrants: A Study in Marginality" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1979) pp. 91-92.

survival mechanism - immunity to failure which leads to blind conformism or successive failure with resignation (choe-noem).¹¹

From his personal experience of working with the Korean wives and their husbands in a church setting, the writer strongly believes that the couple's mutual commitment to religious attendance and participation in Christian fellowship provides a great strength for a better relationship of interracially married couples. This belief is supported by Daniel Booduck Lee's study.¹²

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church with Korean ministry is in an excellent setting to provide the companion patterns of the couples' mutual commitment to their religious life under the same pastoral care by a bilingual pastor in an inclusive church. The writer often notices a great strength building up in interracially married couples who are active in the church, for religious commitment creates new understanding of self and one's relationship with other individuals in love of God.

Organizational Autonomy

The Korean ministry at the Fern Hill United Methodist

¹¹Ibid., p. 160-163

¹²Daniel Booduck Lee, "Military Transcultural Marriage: A Study of Marital Adjustment Between American Husbands and Korean-Born Spouses" (S.W.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1980) p. 189.

Church does not have its own structure and organization yet, because it has been considered as one of the outreach programs belonging to the Caucasian church. Several Korean members are serving on several committees of the Fern Hill United Methodist Church, such as Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and Finance Committee for both groups are using the same pastor and the expenses are to be shared.

But the writer believes that without its own structure and organization, the Korean Ministry will be in a stalemate. There are several reasons:

1. The future of the Korean Ministry cannot be determined by the Caucasian congregation. The Korean Ministry should have its own governing body and program agencies which would initiate, support and implement indigenous programs for the Korean immigrants. If the possibilities of self-determination of the Korean group in the Caucasian church is denied, the Korean group will lose its own identity in the church and in its community. This will make them withdraw from the Fern Hill United Methodist Church and join other Korean churches around. Denial of the autonomy of a group means denial of personal autonomy.

2. Without its own structure and organization, there will be no centripetal force which will bind the Korean members together to carry out their own missional task. Without the binding force, "A ship may go up to the mountain instead of to the river." The Korean group has enough human resources

with which their missional task can be carried on without direct supervision or control by a super structure.

3. Without its own structure and organization, lay leadership development cannot be expected. Under the present situation, there is no lay leadership structure at all in the Korean group except the pastor's leadership. The Korean Ministry should not be limited to Sunday morning worship services which can be done by the pastor, himself. Through active participation in planning and implementation of the ministry by lay people, the Korean Ministry can function lively and grow. The talents, gifts and charisma in laity should be fully mobilized, because lay leadership means a lot and is also a decisive factor in church growth. The lay leadership system, such as lay-elder and lay-deacon, is very common in most Korean churches, including Korean United Methodist Churches in this country. Maintaining that system means that Korean United Methodist Churches are open for the people who are trained and holding leadership in other recognized denominations. It is much easier for the Korean immigrant Christians to shift across the different denominations because of lack of denominationalism among them.

4. Autonomy and a sense of ownership go together. Without financial autonomy responsible stewardship from the Korean members cannot be expected. The budget for the Korean Ministry should be handled by the Korean members even though

they are part of the church. By letting the Korean group handle their budget and share with the Caucasian congregation all the expenses out of their budget, it will give them a sense of responsibility as well as self-esteem.

The church is a voluntary society. Without structure and organization it is too loose to hold together. The structure and organization of any ethnic church should be indigenous according to their cultural tradition and organizational effectiveness in the ethnic group. It is, therefore, recommended that the structure and organization of any ethnic church should be flexible beyond disciplinary structure with the consent of the Bishop and District Superintendent.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION: MINISTRY OF MUTUALITY

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is at the crossroad of changing community with a great number of Korean immigrants, interracial marriages between Korean women and American military personnel, and a cross-cultural appointment of the pastor. By the appointment of a Korean-American pastor to this church at the crossroad the Fern Hill United Methodist Church faces a new challenge for outreach evangelism in the community. The cross-cultural appointment of an ethnic pastor to this church was not an intentional arrangement for the development of the Korean ministry by the Cabinet or appointee. The Korean Ministry at the Fern Hill United Methodist Church is a natural consequence of its response to the needs of the community.

The Fern Hill United Methodist Church is in a perfect setting for the dual ministry for the Caucasian and Korean immigrants in terms of its geographical location, facilities, and pastoral leadership. How could this church ignore this change and turn away from this challenge? The writer believes that this church should take this challenge as a special mandate from God for two reasons:

First, a church cannot exist in a certain community

without identifying with the community. In order to survive and extend its ministry in the community, it is necessary for the church to understand the pluralistic characteristics of its environment and find a new field of mission.

Second, salvation is always three-dimensional - "God and I," "I and You," and "I and the world." And the underlying concept in these relationships is "justice" - right relations between these components. By doing justice to the strangers, the oppressed, the marginalized, we can be justified before God of Justice. Through the inclusive church we experience the liberating God and the salvation of the entire community.

The Korean Ministry at the Fern Hill United Methodist Church can be characterized as a mutual ministry between Caucasians and Korean immigrants. The ministry of mutuality should consist of mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual interaction.¹

Mutual understanding comes from knowing each other. Knowing is not "thinking or analyzing" but "feeling and loving." This is the biblical concept of knowledge. When the biblical writers say, "I know God," it means, "I feel the presence of God," and "I love God." When we understand each other, it leads to a real meeting. Therefore, preparing to understand others means:

¹Reuel L. Howe, Here is Love (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1961) pp. 91ff.

ridding ourselves of prejudices and preconceptions, fears and anxieties, ulterior motives and purposes - in order that we may speak the word of love and truth to others, and to really hear the word of love and truth... that they speak to us... Because we have prepared ourselves for a real meeting between people, we will not so easily seek to manipulate and exploit them.²

Mutual understanding leads to mutual appreciation and respect. Through understanding and contact, human relationships occur, rather than seeing others as an object. Human relationships enable us to meet others at a point of meaning in their lives and to appreciate and respect the individual's separateness and sanctity as a child of God. "You become like us, and we will like you" is a modern heresy in the pluralistic society where we live. This means appreciating and respecting one another as autonomous decision-making persons. Only when we meet others in our presence, appreciation, concern and respect for their autonomy, can we be really of help in their needs.

The third quality necessary for the ministry of mutuality is mutual trust. This implies confidence that others will make the right decisions for themselves and that they will have regard for others as they make their decisions. "Trust, if it is to do its full work, must include mistrust, just as faith must include doubt."²

Further, mutual trust has another basis in it: trusting in what God is trying to accomplish in us even

²Ibid., p. 98

though the way is different from that of ours. It is our confidence of God's action in others.

The fourth and last quality in the ministry of mutuality is mutual interaction. Even small contacts that seem very superficial and impersonal, if repeated, can generate common memories and common tasks upon which we can build stronger ties and community.³ It is our mutual responsibility to build a bridge of Christian love by attending, responding and interacting between the white congregation and the Korean immigrants. Through interaction a new transformation occurs, maybe very gently and voicelessly, within both parties.

The ministry of mutuality is an actual basis upon which just society can be built. This is what God has intended to do through Abraham's journey, the exiles and the immigrants - transformation of the individual life, the society and the world.

Asian-American immigrants are God's vessels by which all the people, ethnic minorities and white majority, can see the purpose of God - raising up in the world a renewed community. What God has initiated, he will also complete in Jesus Christ through his suffering and resurrection. In this Christian perspective, power lies with the marginalized because their capacity to suffer and triumph

³Sang Hyun Lee, "Called to be Pilgrim: Toward a Theology within the Korean Immigrant Context," in Byong-suh Kim and Sang Hyun Lee (eds.) The Korean Immigrant in America (Montclair, NJ: Association of Korean Christian Scholars, 1980) p. 67.

through faith is much greater than the power of the privileged who pursue the status quo.

The Korean immigrants are called to be the vessels of God for his justice. They are called to live and work by faith in the life of pilgrims toward a better "city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). This means using their marginality as a creative force in the salvific history of Jesus Christ where they are.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare (Jer. 29:4-7).

Through the faithful obedience to this call, the sojourners, the Korean immigrants, will find salvation and also will be a blessing for the people they sojourn through toward the promised land (Gen. 12:2,3).

On the other hand, the white majority is called to identify with the suffering members of the society - the poor, the outcasts, the strangers and the marginalized in the eyes of the society. The final criterion the Christ will use in determining who are just and unjust before God will be what the individuals have done to the least of their brethren with whom the Christ fully identifies himself (Mr. 25:31ff).

God's justice is the content of salvation - full

communion with God and full communion with others. God's justice will be fully realized in the consummation of the kingdom of God - a new heaven and new earth which is built in the very nature of God: unity, love and peace.

Our hope is not based on the present situation, but in the future of God, who is determined to establish His kingdom.

APPENDIX

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE*

CHURCH: Fern Hill United Methodist ChurchDATE: January 31, 1983I. Geographical Area Served by the Church: Generally the southeast portion of Tacoma.II. Membership/Constituency:

- (A) Age Breakdown: Youth 5%, Young Adults 3%, Middle Age 12%, Seniors 80%
- (B) Professional/etc: None actively working at this time.
- (C) Community Service Involvement: English classes for Korean immigrants, Food Bank.
- (D) Percentages
 - (1) What percentage of the congregation have been members five years or longer? 90%
 - (2) What percentage of these are involved, other than attending Worship? One-third
- (E) Ethnic Groups
 - (1) What groups are represented? Koreans, Blacks
 - (2) How many? 55 to 60 total

III. Theological Stance:

- (A) What is the congregation's stance? Basically Fundamental
- (B) How diverse is the membership? From a few Liberals to predominantly Fundamental

IV.	5 Year Records:	<u>'78</u>	<u>'79</u>	<u>'80</u>	<u>'81</u>	<u>'82</u>
(A)	Church School Average Attendance	42	40	37	42	33
(B)	UMY Attendance	7	7	6	6	6
(C)	Average Worship Attendance	94	80	74	62	70
(D)	Membership	234	249	240	229	213
(E)	Number of Inactive Members	<u>Approximately one-half</u>				

* This is prepared for the office of District Superintendent.

(F) Causes for membership termination in last two years

1. Death 7
2. Transfer to other UMC 8
3. Transfer to other local denominations 7
4. Transfer to other denominations out of town 3
5. Young people moving away 1
6. Changing community 3

V. Present Program Emphasis: Korean Ministry, Youth and Young Adult Ministry

VI. Goals and Possibilities for:

- (A) Ministry - To reach the Koreans, and the unchurched Caucasians in the community
- (B) Nurture - Membership classes for youth and adults conducted or being planned
- (C) Numerical Growth - 60 members over five years
- (D) Witness and Service - Lay people participate in leading the services and witnessing to others as ongoing program

VII. Governing Bodies

- (A) How do your Commissions, Board and Councils arrive at goals and decisions? We have held a planning retreat, and the commissions have devoted portions of their meetings to planning.

VIII. Ministry of the Laity:

- (A) How does the congregation understand this ministry? A portions perceive it positively and participate in activities to effect growth of the church.

IX. Community:

- (A) Where do the majority of the people (Distance from Church)
 - (1) Attend Elementary School $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 miles
 - (2) Attend High School $\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 miles
 - (3) Attend College 5 to 7 miles
 - (4) See Doctors 5 to 7 miles
 - (5) Receive hospital services 5 to 7 miles

- (B) Are any of the following a problem in your community?
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Community conflicts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate leadership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poverty |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poor roads | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor public schools |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunities for youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community pride |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Over churchd | <input type="checkbox"/> Under churchd |
- (C) Is there general migration of youth out of the community? No
- (D) Is there an active community action group in your community? No
- (E) What other community groups make use of church facilities? Boy Scouts, and Girl's Sea Scouts
- (F) Please indicate community patterns around the Church. Suburban and racially changing

Signature of Pastor

Suburban

Signature of PPRC Chairperson

Suburban

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